

# Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified Plan Requirements

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## **OVERVIEW**

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified State Plan to the U.S. Secretary of Labor that outlines a four-year workforce development strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

### **Options for Submitting a State Plan**

At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult Program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker Program (Title I),
- the Youth Program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

### **How State Plan Requirements Are Organized.**

The major content areas of the Unified State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
  - State Strategy Implementation,

- State Operating Systems and Policies,
- Assurances, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, *Supplement to the Workforce and Innovation Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements*. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.<sup>1</sup> While discussion of and strategies for every target population is not expected, States must address as many as are applicable to their State's population and look beyond strategies for the general population.

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<sup>1</sup> Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

## **I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE**

- ☐ **Unified State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

## **II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS**

The Unified State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth.

- (a) **Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis.** The Unified Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.
  - (1) Economic and Workforce Analysis
    - (A) *Economic Analysis.* The Unified State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-state regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This includes:
      - (i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.
      - (ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.
      - (iii) Employers' Employment Needs. With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.
    - (B) *Workforce Analysis.* The Unified Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA<sup>2</sup>. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups<sup>3</sup> in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: —
      - (i) Employment and Unemployment. Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data and trends in the State.
      - (ii) Labor Market Trends. Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.
      - (iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.
      - (iv) Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

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<sup>2</sup> Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

<sup>3</sup> Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

## I. Ecosystems Impact in Oklahoma on Occupations and Salaries

Oklahoma has identified five ecosystems important to the economy to generate wealth, have employment growth potential, or where the state has a competitive advantage (Aerospace and Defense, Energy, Agriculture and Bioscience, Information and Financial Services, and Transportation and Distribution). In each ecosystem, there are critical occupations necessary for future growth and advancement. In addition to the five statewide ecosystems, there are ecosystems at the regional level, complementary industries that are important for regional economies. The following charts highlight some of the high growth occupations in the various ecosystems.

### Aerospace & Defense

Based on 2015 job numbers there are 112,650 jobs in the Aerospace & Defense Ecosystem in Oklahoma with average earnings of approximately \$64,950.

As a projection of demand by 2020, total employment in the Aerospace and Defense ecosystem will increase to 118,100 jobs in Oklahoma, an increase of 5,450 jobs for the state.

The list below encompasses some of the high growth critical occupations for the Aerospace and Defense ecosystem in Oklahoma. However, while these occupations are not solely intended to serve the Aerospace and Defense ecosystem, they are driven by demand and individuals with these work backgrounds will have transferable skills to other ecosystems.

Occupation	Jobs 2015	Jobs 2020	Change	Entry Requirements
Management Analysts	2,633	3,163	530	Bachelor's degree
Machinists	2,881	3,206	325	Long-term on-the-job training
Software Developers, Applications	1,776	2,034	258	Bachelor's degree
Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	1,374	1,559	185	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Computer User Support Specialists	1,189	1,366	177	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Software Developers, Systems Software	1,037	1,205	168	Bachelor's degree
General and Operations Managers	1,863	2,030	167	Bachelor's degree
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	1,971	2,138	167	Postsecondary non-degree award
Civil Engineers	1,080	1,247	167	Bachelor's degree
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	892	1,054	162	Long-term on-the-job training
Computer Systems Analysts	945	1,105	160	Bachelor's degree
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	584	728	144	Bachelor's degree

Source: EMSI 2015.2

## Energy

Based on 2015 job numbers there are 125,150 jobs in the Energy Ecosystem in Oklahoma with average earnings of \$103,700.

As a projection of demand, by 2020 total employment in the Energy ecosystem will grow to 140,700 jobs in Oklahoma, an addition of 15,550 jobs for the state.

The list below encompasses some of the high growth critical occupations for the Energy ecosystem in Oklahoma. However, while these occupations are not solely intended to serve the Energy ecosystem, they are driven by demand and individuals with these work backgrounds will have transferable skills to other ecosystems.

Occupation	Jobs 2015	Jobs 2020	Change	Entry Requirements
Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	5,272	6,042	770	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Construction Laborers	2,429	3,100	671	Short-term on-the-job training
Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, and Mining	4,318	4,980	662	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	4,384	4,930	546	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Petroleum Engineers	2,963	3,508	545	Bachelor's degree
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,957	4,389	432	Postsecondary non-degree award
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	2,053	2,484	431	Long-term on-the-job training
Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas	2,974	3,327	353	Moderate-term on-the-job training
General and Operations Managers	2,814	3,128	314	Bachelor's degree
Derrick Operators, Oil and Gas	2,045	2,302	257	Short-term on-the-job training
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	2,158	2,384	226	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Machinists	1,735	1,958	223	Long-term on-the-job training

Source: EMSI 2015.2



## Agriculture & Bioscience

Based on 2015 job numbers there are 85,580 jobs in the Agriculture & Bioscience ecosystem in Oklahoma with average earnings of \$53,675.

The list below encompasses some of the high growth critical occupations for the Agriculture and Bioscience ecosystem in Oklahoma. However, these occupations are not solely intended to serve the Agriculture and Bioscience ecosystem, they are driven by demand and individuals with these work backgrounds will have transferable skills to other ecosystems.

Occupation	Jobs 2015	Jobs 2020	Change	Entry Requirements
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	6,962	7,124	162	Short-term on-the-job training
Civil Engineers	1,037	1,199	162	Bachelor's degree
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	1,013	1,174	161	Associate's degree
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	360	474	114	Bachelor's degree
Customer Service Representatives	1,083	1,180	97	Short-term on-the-job training
General and Operations Managers	1,406	1,495	89	Bachelor's degree
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	549	623	74	Long-term on-the-job training
Management Analysts	358	425	67	Bachelor's degree
Interpreters and Translators	155	221	66	Bachelor's degree
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	346	402	56	Associate's degree
Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	890	943	53	Short-term on-the-job training
Mechanical Engineers	505	552	47	Bachelor's degree

Source: EMSI 2015.2

## Information & Financial Services

Based on 2015 job numbers there are 108,850 jobs in the Information & Financial Services ecosystem in Oklahoma with average wages of \$75,090.

As a projection of demand, by 2020 total employment in the Information and Financial Services ecosystem will increase to 111,200 jobs in Oklahoma, an increase of 2,350 jobs for the state.

The list below encompasses some of the high growth critical occupations for the Information and Financial Services ecosystem in Oklahoma. However, these occupations are not solely intended to serve the Information and Financial Services ecosystem, they are driven by demand and individuals with these work backgrounds will have transferable skills to other ecosystems.

Occupation	Jobs 2015	Jobs 2020	Change	Entry Requirements
Accountants and Auditors	7,491	8,006	515	Bachelor's degree
Software Developers, Applications	2,441	2,682	241	Bachelor's degree
Loan Officers	3,760	3,972	212	Bachelor's degree
Tellers	7,375	7,566	191	Short-term on-the-job training
Computer Systems Analysts	1,471	1,648	177	Bachelor's degree
Computer User Support Specialists	2,226	2,342	116	Some college, no degree
Software Developers, Systems Software	1,106	1,213	107	Bachelor's degree
Financial Managers	2,771	2,875	104	Bachelor's degree
Personal Financial Advisors	1,678	1,768	90	Bachelor's degree
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	688	769	81	Bachelor's degree
Computer and Information Systems Managers	1,245	1,309	64	Bachelor's degree
Financial Analysts	855	907	52	Bachelor's degree

Source: EMSI 2015.2

## Transportation & Distribution

Based on 2015 job numbers there are 126,220 jobs in the Transportation & Distribution ecosystem in Oklahoma with average earnings of \$65,800.

As a projection of demand, by 2020 total employment in the Transportation and Distribution ecosystem will increase to 129,450, a gain of 3,230 jobs for the state.

The list below encompasses some of the high growth critical occupations for the Transportation and Distribution ecosystem in Oklahoma. However, these occupations are not solely intended to serve the Transportation and Distribution ecosystem, they are driven by demand and individuals with these work backgrounds will have transferable skills to other ecosystems.

Occupation	Jobs 2015	Jobs 2020	Change	Entry Requirements
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	8,905	9,624	719	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	17,956	18,445	489	Postsecondary non-degree award
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	8,552	9,020	468	Short-term on-the-job training
General and Operations Managers	3,167	3,326	159	Bachelor's degree
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	1,591	1,728	137	Postsecondary non-degree award
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	953	1,086	133	Long-term on-the-job training
Customer Service Representatives	2,951	3,075	124	High school diploma or equivalent
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	3,494	3,596	102	Bachelor's degree
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	2,594	2,675	81	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	2,673	2,747	74	High school diploma or equivalent
Commercial Pilots	144	205	61	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Sales Managers	1,017	1,070	53	Bachelor's degree
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	374	427	53	Bachelor's degree
Accountants and Auditors	872	913	41	Bachelor's degree

Source: EMSI 2015.2

## Health Care (Complementary)

Based on 2015 job numbers there are 237,100 jobs in the Health Care ecosystem in Oklahoma with average wages of \$51,800.

As a projection of demand, by 2020 total employment in the Health Care ecosystem will grow to 263,900 jobs in Oklahoma, an increase of 26,800 jobs for the state.

The list below encompasses some of the high growth critical occupations for the Health Care ecosystem in Oklahoma. However, these occupations are not solely intended to serve the Health Care ecosystem, they are driven by demand and individuals with these work backgrounds will have transferable skills to other ecosystems.

Occupation	Jobs 2015	Jobs 2020	Change	Entry Requirements
Registered Nurses	21,964	24,486	2,522	Associate's degree
Personal Care Aides	13,714	16,119	2,405	Short-term on-the-job training
Home Health Aides	7,128	8,422	1,294	Short-term on-the-job training
Medical Secretaries	6,925	8,034	1,109	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Nursing Assistants	16,034	17,081	1,047	Postsecondary non-degree award
Medical Assistants	7,379	8,272	893	Postsecondary non-degree award
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	9,270	10,032	762	Postsecondary non-degree award
Dental Assistants	3,960	4,561	601	Postsecondary non-degree award
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	1,888	2,346	458	Postsecondary non-degree award
Pharmacy Technicians	3,928	4,362	434	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Medical and Health Services Managers	4,069	4,489	420	Bachelor's degree
Dental Hygienists	1,824	2,244	420	Associate's degree
Physical Therapists	1,638	2,010	372	Doctoral or professional degree
Dentists, General	1,887	2,240	353	Doctoral or professional degree

Source: EMSI 2015.2

## Construction (Complementary)

Based on 2015 job numbers there are 211,150 jobs in the Construction ecosystem in Oklahoma with average wages of \$53,270.

As a projection of demand, by 2020 total employment in the Construction ecosystem will grow to 225,470 jobs in Oklahoma, an addition of 14,320 jobs for the state.

The list below encompasses some of the high growth critical occupations for the Construction ecosystem in Oklahoma. However, these occupations are not solely intended to serve the Construction ecosystem, they are driven by demand and individuals with these work backgrounds will have transferable skills to other ecosystems.

Occupation	Jobs 2015	Jobs 2020	Change	Entry Requirements
Construction Laborers	15,702	17,248	1,546	Short-term on-the-job training
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	4,801	5,342	541	Apprenticeship
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	3,872	4,412	540	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Electricians	6,065	6,518	453	Apprenticeship
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,361	3,781	420	Postsecondary non-degree award
General and Operations Managers	4,181	4,547	366	Bachelor's degree
Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	2,725	3,084	359	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	4,700	5,058	358	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Machinists	3,290	3,629	339	Long-term on-the-job training
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	3,439	3,737	298	Postsecondary non-degree award
Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	1,124	1,370	246	Bachelor's degree
Civil Engineers	1,524	1,765	241	Bachelor's degree
Cost Estimators	1,482	1,693	211	Bachelor's degree
Carpenters	10,309	10,511	202	Apprenticeship

Source: EMSI 2015.2

## Manufacturing (Regional Complementary)

Based on 2015 job numbers there are 140,550 jobs in the Manufacturing ecosystem in Oklahoma with average wages of \$66,000.

As a projection of demand, by 2020 total employment in the Manufacturing ecosystem will increase to 141,700 jobs in Oklahoma, a gain of 1,150 jobs for the state.

The list below encompasses some of the critical occupations for the Manufacturing ecosystem in Oklahoma. However, these occupations are not solely intended to serve the Manufacturing ecosystem, they are driven by demand and individuals with these work backgrounds will have transferable skills to other ecosystems.

Occupation	Jobs 2015	Jobs 2020	Change	Entry Requirements
Machinists	5,506	5,993	487	Long-term on-the-job training
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,935	2,144	209	Long-term on-the-job training
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	7,014	7,219	205	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	1,285	1,453	168	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,670	1,800	130	Postsecondary non-degree award
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	4,087	4,190	103	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Industrial Engineers	1,161	1,246	85	Bachelor's degree
Mechanical Engineers	1,475	1,548	73	Bachelor's degree
Logisticians	347	391	44	Bachelor's degree
Software Developers, Systems Software	380	423	43	Bachelor's degree
Aerospace Engineers	236	278	42	Bachelor's degree
Sheet Metal Workers	1,286	1,324	38	Apprenticeship

Source: EMSI 2015.2

## Assessment of the Current Economic Situation and Projected Trends

According to the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, from January 2010 through September 2015, Oklahoma experienced a total non-farm employment gain of 7.7%. For calendar year 2014, Oklahoma experienced a total non-farm employment gain of 1.4%. The state experienced solid employment growth as a result of the oil and gas boom in the early years of the 2010's, however low oil prices in 2015 has negatively affected employment levels. Statewide employment levels may be impacted until oil prices recover, however, many employees laid off from the oil patch were able find jobs in complementary industries. Economic developers are hopeful that trend will continue if oil prices fail to recover in the short term.

### STATEWIDE INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

Industry	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change	% Change
Crop and Animal Production	22,236	19,393	(2,843)	(13%)
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	62,997	71,884	8,887	14%
Utilities	12,549	12,857	308	2%
Construction	107,449	115,841	8,392	8%
Manufacturing	140,553	141,728	1,175	1%
Wholesale Trade	66,250	69,209	2,959	4%
Retail Trade	188,733	193,437	4,704	2%
Transportation and Warehousing	50,820	52,475	1,655	3%
Information	22,551	20,750	(1,801)	(8%)
Finance and Insurance	62,582	63,997	1,415	2%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	24,665	24,465	(200)	(1%)
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	82,431	91,260	8,829	11%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	19,266	19,953	687	4%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	117,418	119,391	1,973	2%
Educational Services	25,153	27,385	2,232	9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	197,755	221,794	24,039	12%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	17,837	19,175	1,338	8%
Accommodation and Food Services	145,268	156,656	11,388	8%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	82,498	81,896	(602)	(1%)
Government	364,946	377,475	12,529	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,813,957</b>	<b>1,901,022</b>	<b>87,065</b>	<b>5%</b>

Source: EMSI 2015.2 Class of Worker

## STATEWIDE OCCUPATION PROJECTIONS

Occupation	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change	% Change
Management Occupations	107,746	109,297	1,551	1%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	74,703	79,100	4,397	6%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	31,734	33,591	1,857	6%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	31,602	34,028	2,426	8%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	12,988	13,761	773	6%
Community and Social Service Occupations	33,328	35,648	2,320	7%
Legal Occupations	17,032	18,371	1,339	8%
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	98,738	104,153	5,415	5%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	22,643	23,553	910	4%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	98,688	108,362	9,674	10%
Healthcare Support Occupations	47,994	52,850	4,856	10%
Protective Service Occupations	38,421	41,731	3,310	9%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	150,770	161,511	10,741	7%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	61,914	65,761	3,847	6%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	57,766	60,515	2,749	5%
Sales and Related Occupations	176,998	181,274	4,276	2%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	274,096	283,053	8,957	3%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	11,667	11,705	38	0%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	112,384	121,615	9,231	8%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	79,983	83,877	3,894	5%
Production Occupations	120,060	121,145	1,085	1%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	117,144	120,607	3,463	3%
Military occupations	35,580	35,517	(63)	(0%)
Unclassified Occupation	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,813,978</b>	<b>1,901,024</b>	<b>87,046</b>	<b>5%</b>

Source: EMSI 2015.2 Class of Worker

The tables above give a statewide perspective. The following link provides access to a series of tables that show labor market data from Oklahoma's Workforce Development Areas, providing a regional assessment of the state's current and projected economic situation.

### Industry Projections at the WDA Level:

[http://www.ok.gov/oesc\\_web/documents/wiaindproj1222.xlsx](http://www.ok.gov/oesc_web/documents/wiaindproj1222.xlsx)

The following link provides information including mean hourly wages per occupation and the skills and/or educational attainment required. The data and economic outlook they provide are important for strategic planning purposes.

[http://www.ok.gov/oesc\\_web/documents/wiaoccproj1222.xlsx](http://www.ok.gov/oesc_web/documents/wiaoccproj1222.xlsx)

### Additional regional Labor Market Information can be found at this link:

[http://www.ok.gov/oesc\\_web/Services/Find\\_Labor\\_Market\\_Statistics/index.html](http://www.ok.gov/oesc_web/Services/Find_Labor_Market_Statistics/index.html)



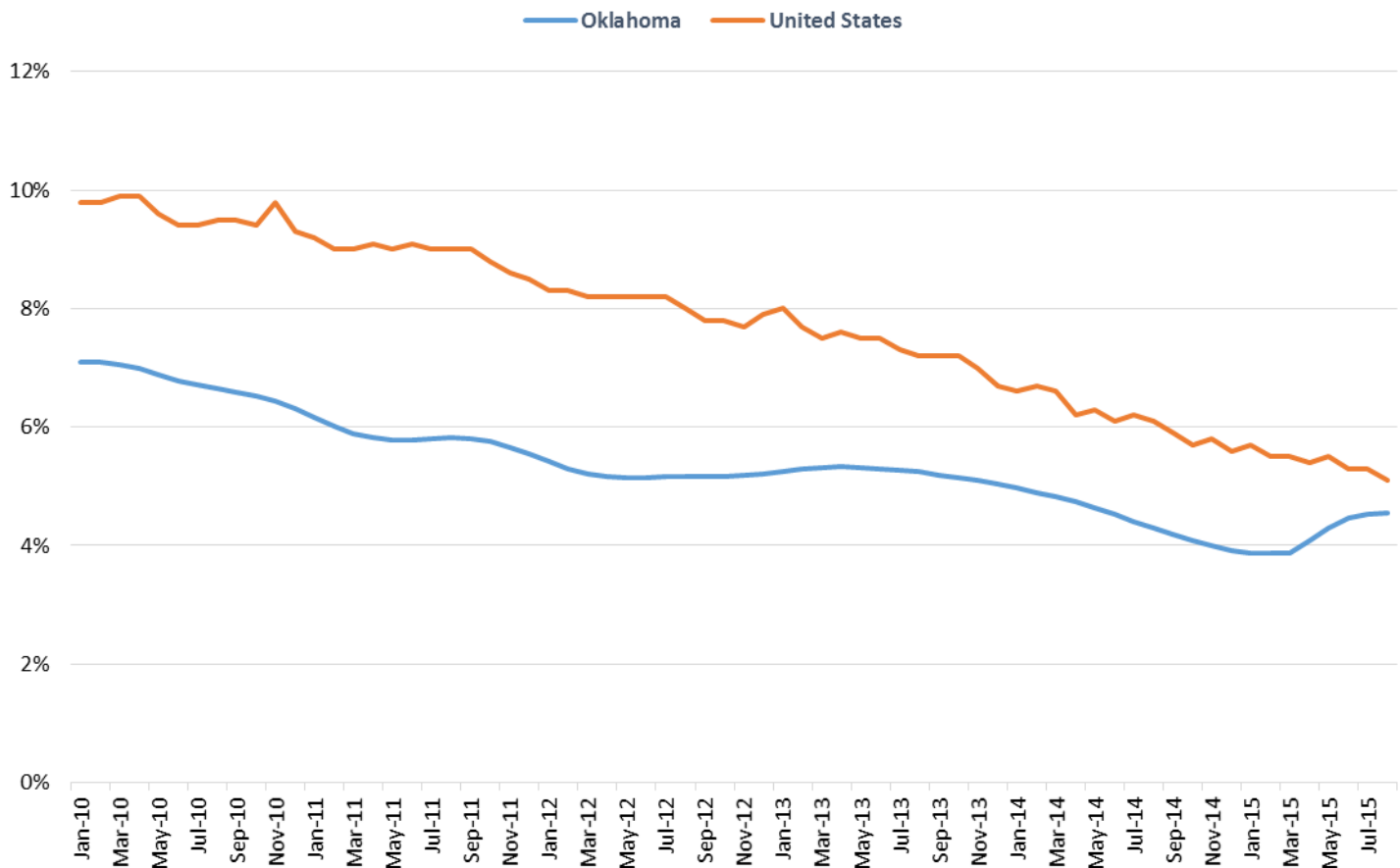
## Fastest Growing/Demand Occupations in Oklahoma:

[http://www.ok.gov/oesc\\_web/documents/trendfastestgrowing2022.xls](http://www.ok.gov/oesc_web/documents/trendfastestgrowing2022.xls)

The top five demand occupations in Oklahoma are within the healthcare industry and range from personal health care aides, who need less than a high school diploma and some on-the-job training and make only \$18,160 a year, to Audiologist, who need a Doctoral degree and make \$70,760 annually.

## Statewide Unemployment Rate vs. National Unemployment

### Five Year Unemployment Rate - Oklahoma and National



Oklahoma has had one of the nation's lowest unemployment rates and has routinely stayed well below the national average. Since January 2010, Oklahoma has continuously stayed below the national unemployment rate. After reaching a peak of 7.1% in January and February 2010, the Oklahoma unemployment rate has steadily declined before bottoming out at 3.9%. Layoffs in the energy sector causing ripple effects in other complementary industries have caused the unemployment rate in Oklahoma to rise over the past few months. As of August 2015, the unemployment rate is 4.6%; still below the national average of 5.1%.

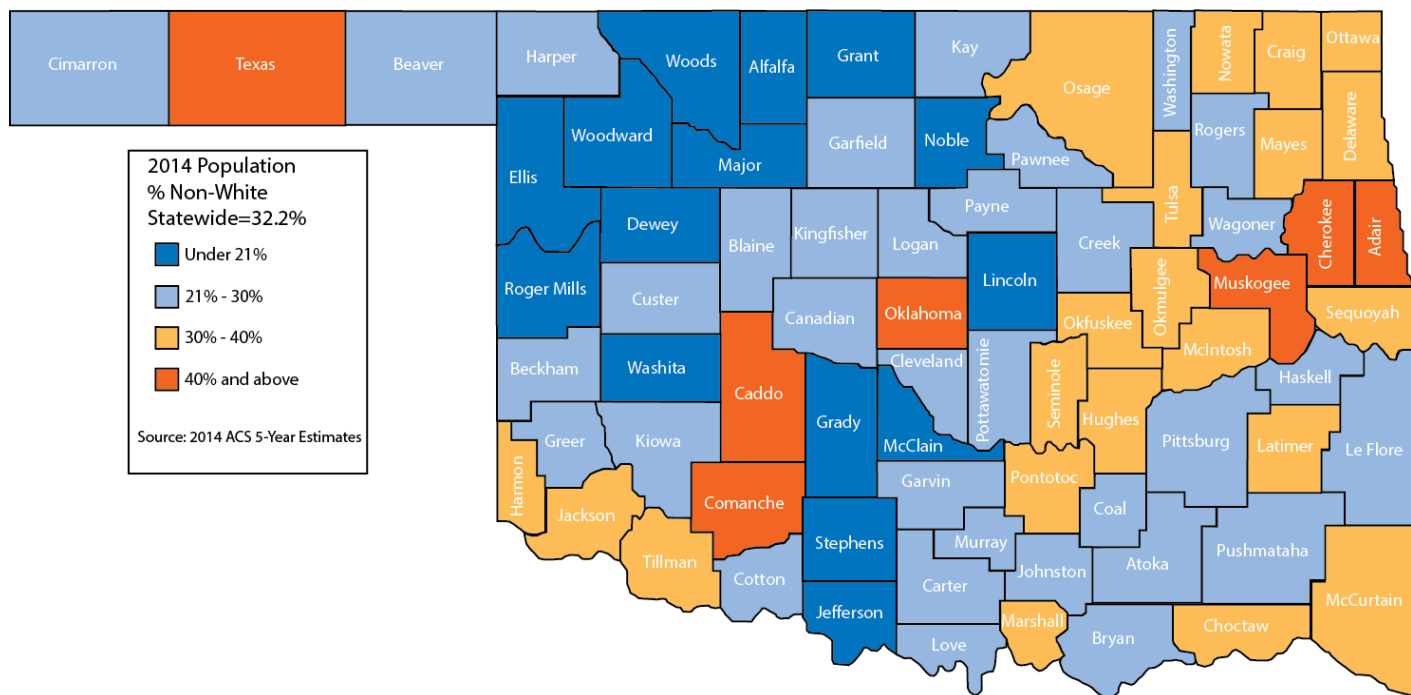
### Characteristics and Employment-Related Needs of Oklahoma's Population

Oklahoma's population will continue to become more diverse in the future. In the 5-year projections, **Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander** will have the largest change with a 15% growth rate, although this group has the lowest total population. They are followed by **Non-White Hispanic** at 14% and **White Hispanics** at 11%. The largest numerical gain in population will be **White, Hispanic, Two or More Races, and White, Non-Hispanic**. Overall, **Hispanics** are projected to have a large increase in population by 2020. No racial or ethnic groups are projected to have a loss during the timeframe covered by this strategic plan.

Race/Ethnicity	2015 Population	2020 Population	Change	% Change
White, Non-Hispanic	2,603,016	2,616,993	13,977	1%
White, Hispanic	324,690	359,146	34,456	11%
Non-White, Hispanic	72,867	82,863	9,996	14%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	324,081	335,277	11,196	3%
Black or African American	286,743	294,763	8,020	3%
Two or More Races	219,617	239,068	19,451	9%
Asian	76,491	83,495	7,004	9%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5,251	6,027	776	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,912,756</b>	<b>4,017,633</b>	<b>104,877</b>	<b>3%</b>

Population diversity is not homogeneously divided among the state's counties, as Oklahoma has varying amounts of racial and ethnic diversity.

## 2014 Population Percent Non-White by County



Diversity map captures all ethnicities except White, Non-Hispanic

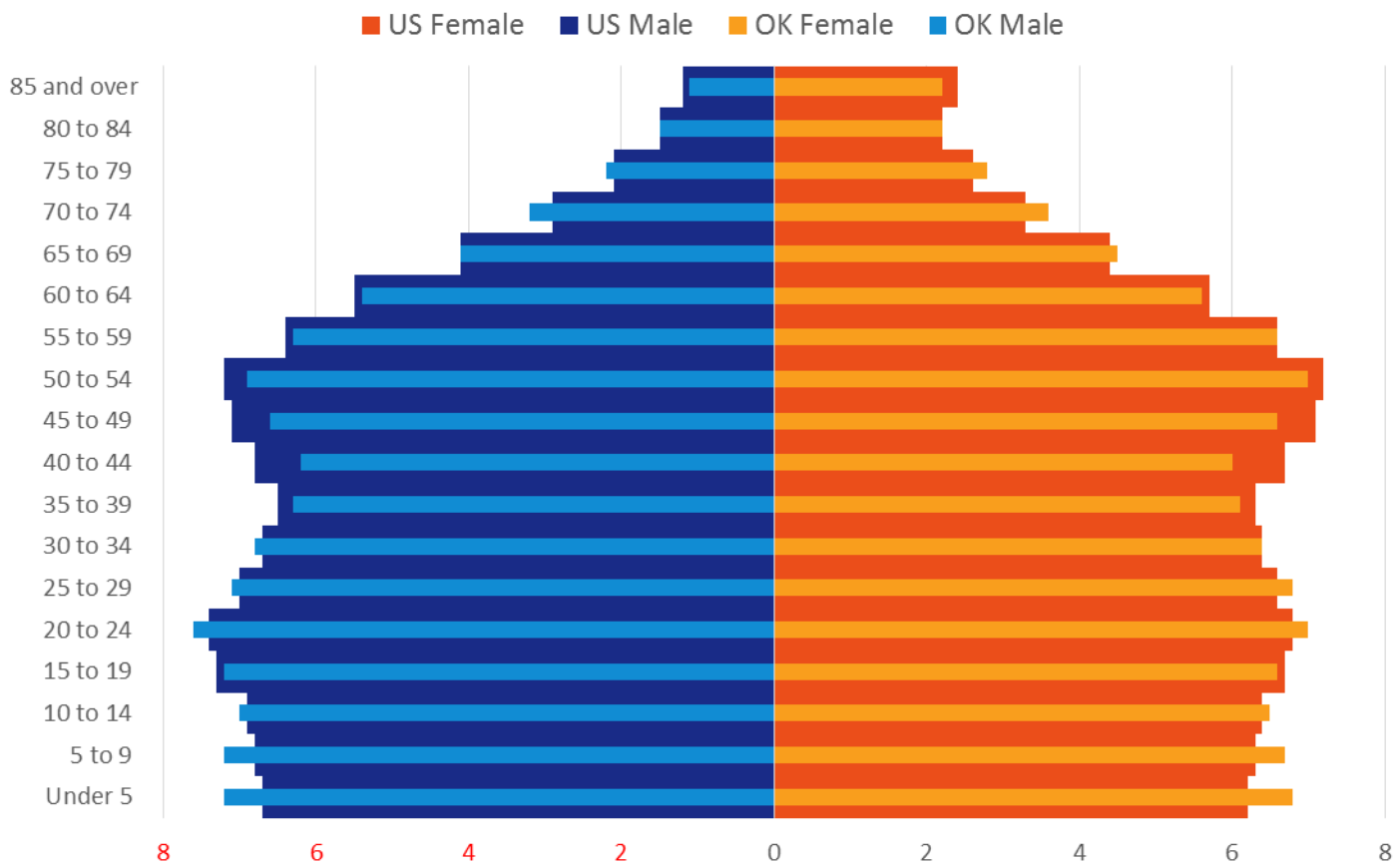


Between the 2010 Census and July 2014, Oklahoma experienced a population growth of 3.4%, which is slightly higher than the national average. However, the population growth was not concentrated in any particular age cohort. Oklahoma continues to have an aging population, which is also consistent with the national average. One troubling aspect is the loss of individuals in the 45-59 age group, which is typically in the prime of their working career. Another age cohort with losing population is the 20-24 age bracket; this age group is in their college years and it will be imperative to attract this age group back to Oklahoma. A positive note is Oklahoma is projected to experience a baby-boom. There is significant growth in the 19 and under population in Oklahoma, especially compared to the national average.

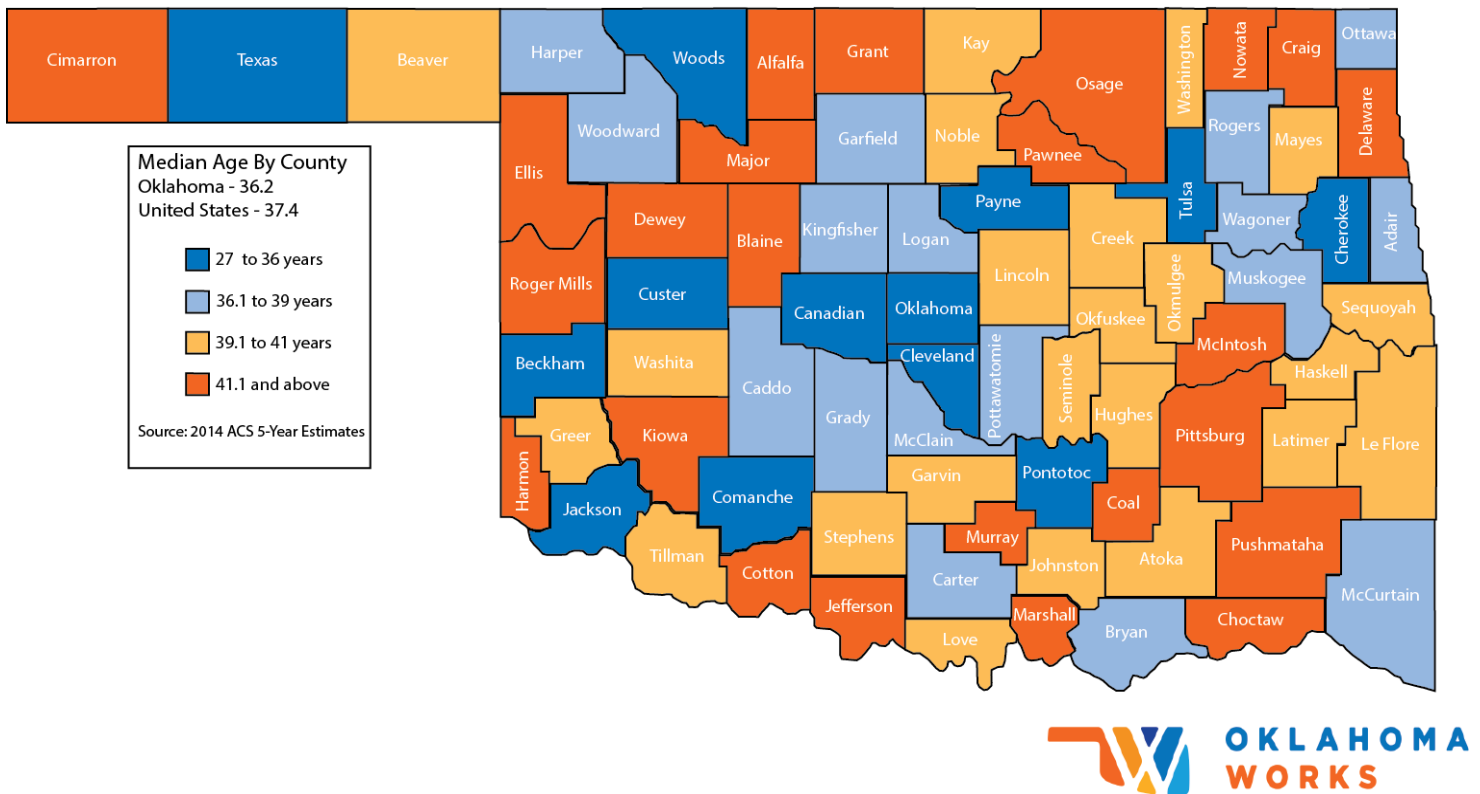
Age Cohort	2015 Population	2020 Population	Change	% Change
Under 5 years	271,338	286,098	14,760	5%
5 to 9 years	268,410	270,184	1,774	1%
10 to 14 years	271,513	275,358	3,845	1%
15 to 19 years	247,404	282,798	35,394	14%
20 to 24 years	293,174	256,373	(36,801)	(13%)
25 to 29 years	269,858	273,282	3,424	1%
30 to 34 years	269,571	272,243	2,672	1%
35 to 39 years	240,665	264,591	23,926	10%
40 to 44 years	230,223	237,016	6,793	3%
45 to 49 years	234,985	226,860	(8,125)	(3%)
50 to 54 years	251,859	229,924	(21,935)	(9%)
55 to 59 years	260,004	245,069	(14,935)	(6%)
60 to 64 years	233,049	253,507	20,458	9%
65 to 69 years	190,321	217,986	27,665	15%
70 to 74 years	144,056	169,474	25,418	18%
75 to 79 years	101,814	119,279	17,465	17%
80 to 84 years	70,387	74,119	3,732	5%
85 years and over	64,123	63,471	(652)	(1%)
Total	3,912,756	4,017,633	104,877	3%

Source: QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed – EMSI 2015.2 Class of Worker

### Age/Sex Pyramid for Oklahoma vs. United States



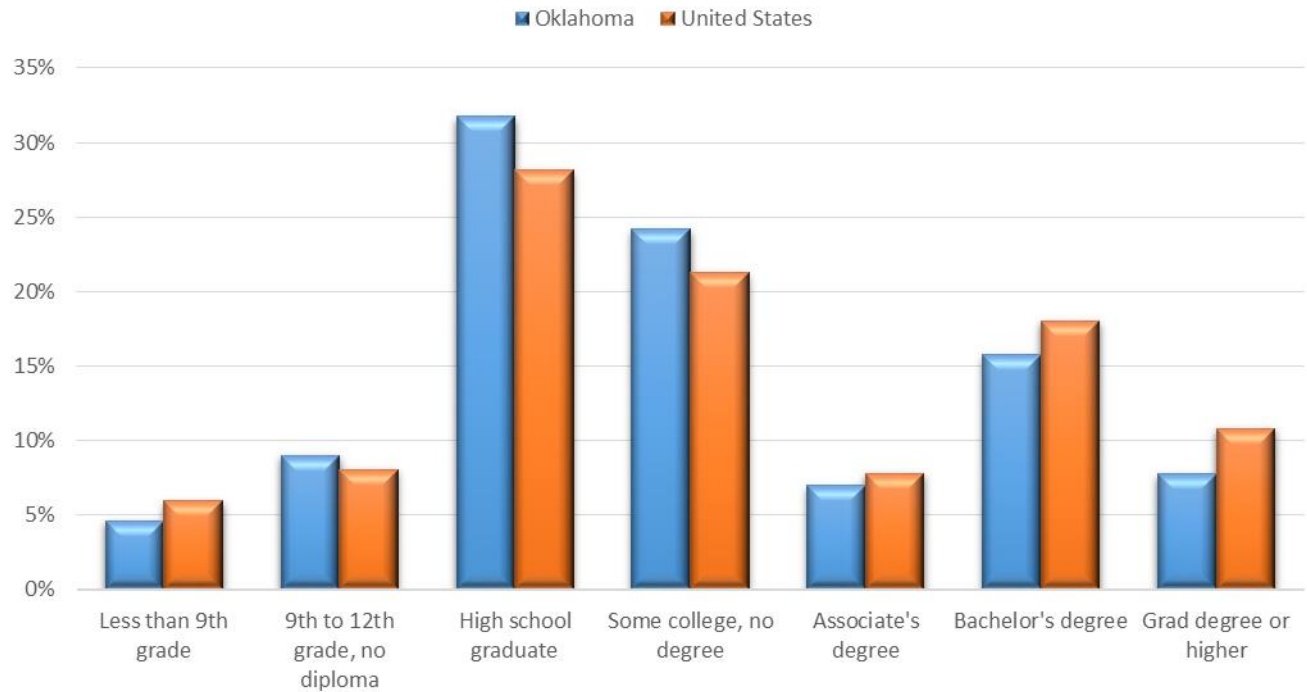
## Median Age by County



Like the distribution of race and ethnicity, Oklahoma has a wide variance of median age among its counties. Those counties with an educational institution, such as a university or community college, or a military base, have a much lower median age than those that do not.

Having a younger population provides those areas with a growing and more physically able workforce; however the cumulative knowledge, skills and abilities may be low due to experience in the workforce. Rural Oklahoma faces challenges as many of the counties have an advancing median age that hinders population growth and the availability of labor for highly physical occupations, such as, production.

## Oklahoma Educational Attainment



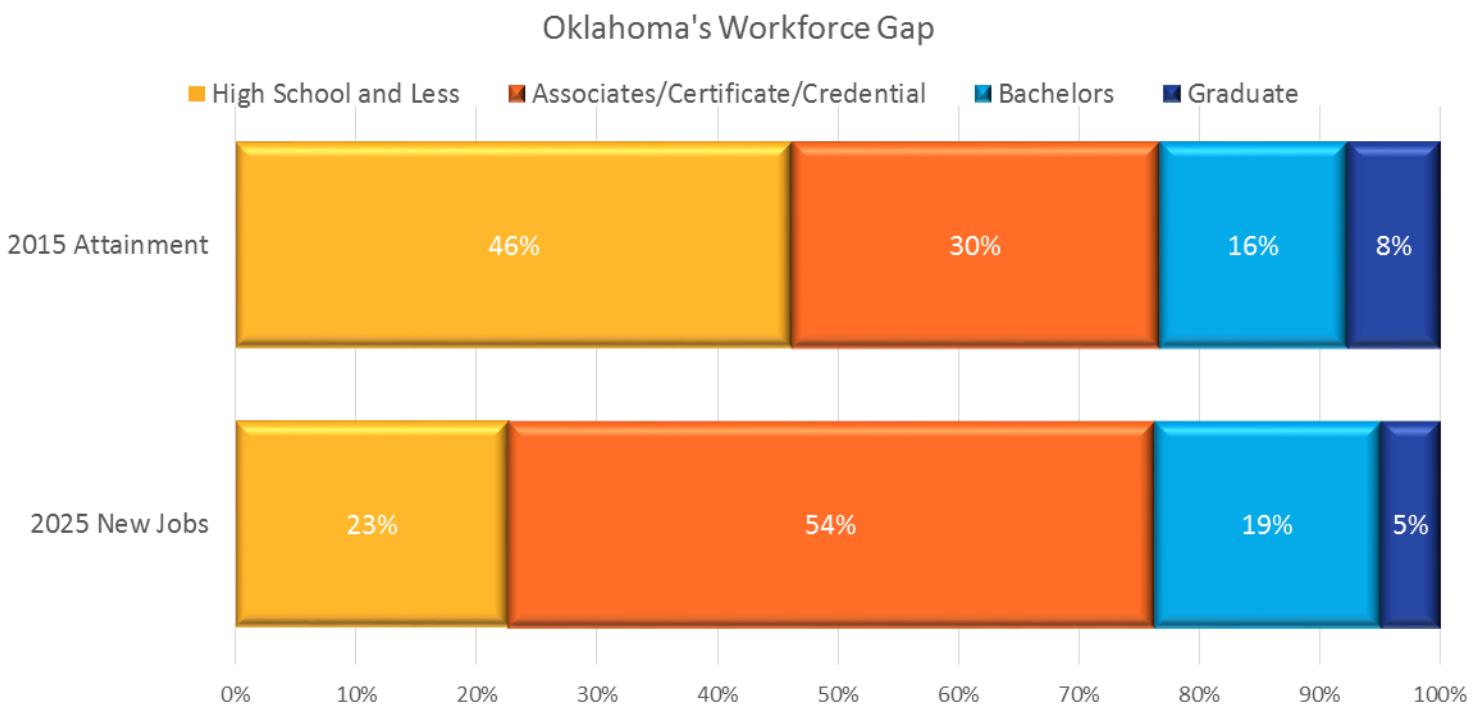
Education will continue to be an integral part in developing the Workforce in Oklahoma. Based on the 2013 ACS Census estimates, 86.4% of people residing in Oklahoma have attained at least a high school degree. This is slightly above the national average of 86.0%. However, as a state, Oklahoma has lower post-secondary educational attainment levels than the national average. For example, Oklahoma has a higher percentage of individuals with “Some college, no degree”, but lower percentages of “Associate’s degree”, “Bachelor’s degree”, and “Grad degree or higher”. “Grad degree or higher” is the largest gap of post-secondary educational attainment between state and national averages, at 3.1%.

## Analysis of the Skill and Education Gaps

While Oklahoma out performs the nation in the percentage of its citizens with at least a high school degree, the lack of a highly educated workforce hinders the state's competitiveness given the higher demands for knowledge, skills and abilities in today's global economy. Oklahoma is five percentage points behind the nation in the percentage of the population age 25 years and over who have at least a bachelor's degree.

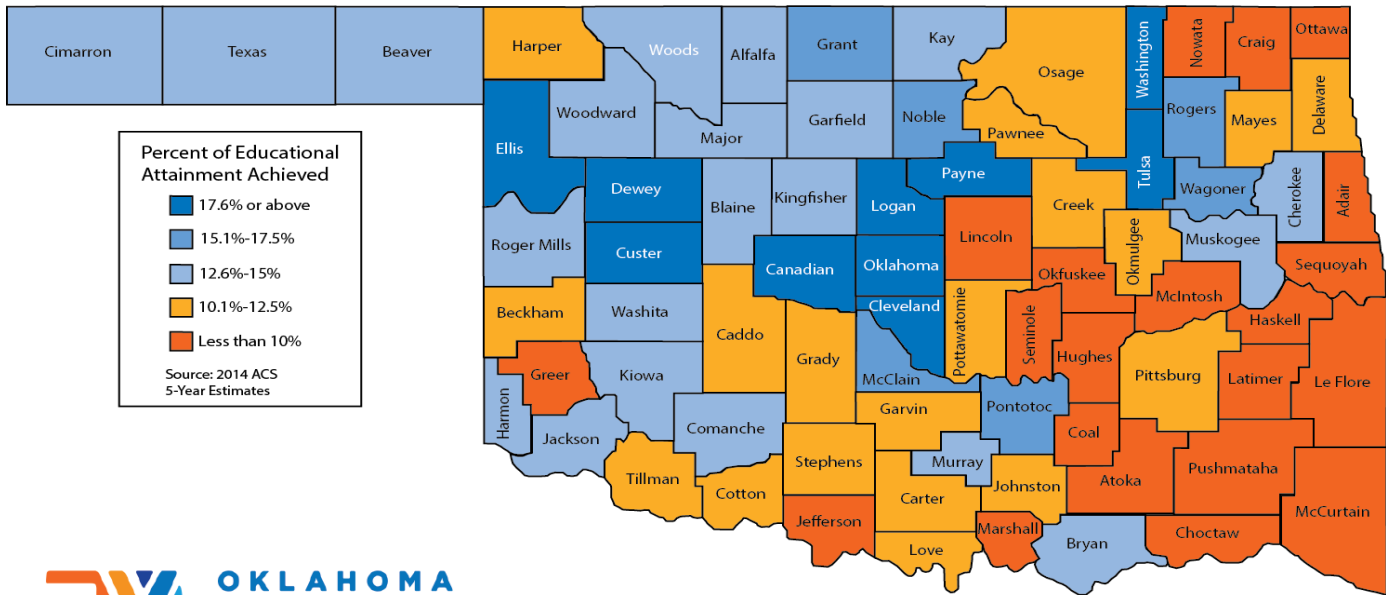
Oklahoma has significant room for improvement with regards to educating its workforce. In 2015, 46% of jobs in Oklahoma require a high school diploma or less, by 2025, new jobs created in Oklahoma will be half that, 23%. The main gap comes at the post-secondary education/Associate's degree/credential. More than 50% of the new jobs created in Oklahoma by 2025 will require some sort of training and certification. There is a slight increase in jobs that require Bachelor's degree or higher, but it is imperative there is a qualified and trained workforce to fill the new jobs in 2025.

Colleges, Universities, and Career Techs are instrumental in developing the workforce of Oklahoma. Fortunately, Oklahoma is home to more than 130 educational institutions across the state which help supply local businesses and organizations with a workforce to make Oklahoma competitive in today's and the future economy.

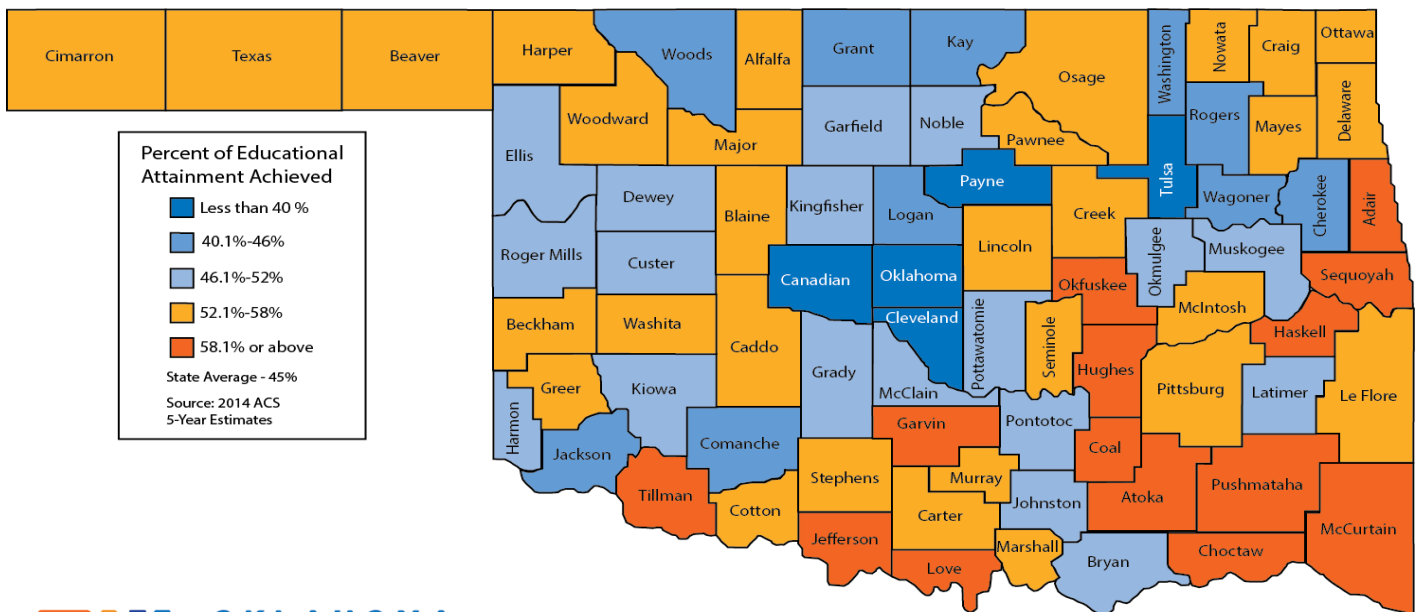


Source: OK Office of Workforce Development; EMSI Q2, 2015

## Highest Level of Educational Attainment: Bachelor's Degree



## Highest Level of Educational Attainment: High School Degree or Less





## Analysis of the Challenges with Attaining the Education, Skills and Training for Employment

Increasingly, employers are expressing concern about finding enough workers with the right skills in Oklahoma. Our labor market analysis indicates we face dual and crucial problems: the likelihood of chronic and growing shortages of workers and a prospect of too few workers possessing the skills employers are and will be demanding.

Employers—through ongoing informal conversations and several formal industry-specific and general employer surveys—report they are unable to take on new projects because of existing workforce shortages. This problem seems persistent in all of Oklahoma’s key industry sectors. Quantifiable need has been identified for nurses, engineers, mechanics, and machinists. And again, employer interviews also reveal anecdotal but passionate urging to strengthen the skill sets of entry level positions in each industry.

Further, the skill expectations in Oklahoma’s key industries (advanced manufacturing and aerospace, business services, construction, energy and energy efficiency, and healthcare) are increasing, and we face a gap that must be bridged. Oklahoma employers are looking for workers who bring substantial knowledge and skills to their work, along with a desire to keep learning while working. They’re looking for workers who have strong basic skills – math, science, reading, computing – along with the ability to work effectively in teams, who can write clearly, and can analyze and synthesize well. In addition, a range of skills and knowledge that are specific to a given industry and a particular occupation are expected as well.

A crucial reality is now very clear: a high school diploma is essential, and yet is insufficient to ensure that someone is ready for employment in a good job. Every Oklahoman needs at least a high school diploma or equivalent to succeed, and, in reality, will need skills and educational attainment that go beyond high school graduation.

If Oklahoma can solve its shortages of workers and skills, businesses can continue to locate here and expand, and workers can enjoy increasing prosperity. But if we fail to solve these dual shortages, our future will be:

- Fewer Oklahomans with the skills to fill our industry needs;
- Fewer companies that can expand in Oklahoma;
- Fewer companies that choose to locate in Oklahoma;
- Stunted economic growth that inhibits our citizens from gaining wealth and acquiring the assets needed to function in a volatile labor market; and,
- A significant competitive disadvantage against other states and nations that have transformed themselves into agile communities, ready to adapt to ongoing change.

- (2) Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis. The Unified State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of –
- (A) *The State's Workforce Development Activities.* Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and mandatory and optional one-stop delivery system partners.<sup>4</sup>

Oklahoma's economy has advanced over the past several years, and continues to diversify today. The state has been a leader in employment growth and has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. Despite these accomplishments, however, Oklahoma's workforce faces a substantial skills gap. As of 2015, 46 percent of Oklahomans have a high school diploma or less education. Projections show that in 2025 only 23 percent of the state's increasingly robust labor market will be accessible to Oklahomans who have at most a high school diploma. In other words, there is a 23 percentage point skills gap between the credentials Oklahoma's current workforce possesses and what the state's future economy will require.

In order for Oklahoma to meet labor demands, for businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and prosper, and for Oklahoma citizens to maintain wealth-generating occupations, we must understand the new minimum for success moving forward will increasingly include a postsecondary degree or credential. Governor Mary Fallin created Oklahoma Works to address this crisis

- (B) *The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities.* Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

Oklahoma Works is an initiative designed to increase the wealth of all Oklahomans through providing education and training for citizens to obtain quality employment. Governor Fallin's rationale is that coordinating strategic priorities and plans across education, training, and industry will increase the wealth of all Oklahomans by providing employment opportunities for workers and ready availability of highly skilled talent for business and industry. The initiative is built upon a coalition of businesses, educational institutions, state agencies, and other partners.

The goal of Oklahoma Works is to implement wealth-generating policies across the state through the alignment of private and public strategic priorities, helping all Oklahomans to achieve the American Dream. To achieve the overarching goal of wealth generation for all Oklahomans and combat the skills gap, the Office of the Governor, its state workforce partners, and numerous other contributors created this plan. The four Oklahoma Works objectives, listed

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<sup>4</sup> Mandatory one-stop partners: Each local area must have one comprehensive one-stop center that provides access to physical services of the core programs and other required partners. In addition to the core programs, for individuals with multiple needs to access the services, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American Programs, HUD Employment and Training Programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs Program, Senior Community Service Employment Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs, Unemployment Compensation Programs, and YouthBuild. TANF is now a required partner, unless the Governor takes special action to make TANF an optional one-stop partner.

below, seek to provide necessary support and remove education and workforce barriers for the citizens of Oklahoma.

- Objective 1: ALIGN AND CONNECT

Develop, align and connect the education and training pipeline with the needs of the state's regional economies by coordinating strategic priorities and plans across the education and workforce system.

- Objective 2: DATA

Integrate and use workforce and economic development data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success.

- Objective 3: PARTNERSHIPS

Build partnerships between local industry and education at the regional level.

- Objective 4: RESOURCES

Optimize use of resources and incentives to achieve the Oklahoma Works goal.

- (C) *State Workforce Development Capacity*. Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

Within Oklahoma, The Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED) has been tasked with using data to inform policy, track progress and measure success. State workforce partners, departments, and agencies impacting career readiness have developed metrics for targeted wealth generation across Oklahoma. The GCWED selected targets from these metrics, housed on OKStateStat.OK.gov, that form the foundation of the Governor's Council Dashboard. This dashboard facilitates the use of data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success consistently statewide.

Key Economic Networks (KENs) are areas in which labor market data demonstrate geographic similarities with regard to occupations and commuting patterns. Within these areas, regional business leaders, educators, private organizations, and workforce partner staff collaborate to identify solutions to local challenges that, when addressed regionally, will help to grow a skilled workforce and encourage wealth generation in the state. Each KEN region has a Champion, a regional leader from business and industry appointed by the Governor who coordinates local efforts to support Oklahoma Works.

As part of Oklahoma Works, state workforce partners will intentionally align and connect education and workforce resources to better provide support and remove workforce barriers for the citizens of Oklahoma. Workforce partners will also establish an annual review of funding sources and incentives provided by federal, state, and local sources and chart the effectiveness of federal and state funding used by the state's education, workforce, and economic development system. Additionally, departments and agencies impacting career readiness will continue tracking metrics for targeted wealth generation. Oklahoma launched OklahomaWorks.gov to serve as the state's comprehensive platform and

interactive labor market tool for a broad audience, including job seekers, employers, workforce partners, and policy makers. The site includes information on job openings, labor market data, degree and credential requirements, and available education and training resources. Departments and agencies impacting career readiness will continue tracking metrics for targeted wealth generation. Oklahoma launched OKStateStat.OK.gov in 2015 to house performance data for the state, including the metrics for Oklahoma Works. The website serves as the performance framework for Oklahoma's new transparent Performance-Informed Budgeting system.

(b) **State Strategic Vision and Goals.** The Unified State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

(1) Vision. Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

Gov. Fallin created the Oklahoma Works Initiative to help Oklahomans achieve the American dream through addressing the substantial skills gap in Oklahoma's workforce. To meet labor demands and maintain wealth-building occupations, Oklahoma must understand the new minimum for success requires a post-secondary degree or credential.

The Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED) has been tasked with using data to inform policy, track progress and measure success. State workforce partners, departments and agencies impacting career readiness, are developing skmetrics for targeted wealth generation across the state.

Regional private business leaders and regional state workforce partners' staff will lead Key Economic Networks (KENs) to provide regional and statewide qualitative data on local economies and foster regional partnerships. These KENs will identify local and regional challenges to wealth generation and will develop locally-based solutions through business leaders, economic development organizations and regional agency partners.

State workforce partners will establish an annual review of funding sources and incentives provided by federal, state and local sources. In addition, state workforce partners will chart the effectiveness of federal and state funding used by the state's education, workforce and economic development system.

Oklahoma has a substantial skills gap in its workforce. As we look to the year 2020, the state's greatest challenge will be increasing the number of students with workforce credentials or associate degrees, as well as increasing the number of college graduates. Current estimates show a 23-point gap between our current workforce and the skilled workforce we will need by 2020.

For Oklahoma businesses to meet labor demands, and for Oklahoma citizens to maintain wealth-building occupations, we must understand that the new minimum for success requires a post-secondary degree or credential. Gov. Fallin created Oklahoma Works to address this crisis.

(2) Goals. Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This should—

- (A) Include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment<sup>5</sup> and other populations.<sup>6</sup>
- (B) Include goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

In order to achieve the ambitious goals that have been set through Oklahoma Works, the initiative's full array of workforce partners must align their efforts and take active roles in ensuring that resources are used in ways that maximize, strengthen, and support the education to workforce pipeline for all Oklahomans. Underpinning all Oklahoma Works efforts is a comprehensive asset map, built and maintained by the Delivery Unit within the Office of Management and Enterprise Services, which helps to describe the current set of workforce resources and activities in Oklahoma. The map acts as a plan and push to share and maximize resources in service of the Oklahoma Works goal. See Appendix A for the current asset maps.

When fully leveraged, the knowledge generated from the Oklahoma Works asset map will allow us to provide our workforce partners, regional networks, and citizens with knowledge of available resources at the state and local level. We will also be able to effectively evaluate local and statewide socioeconomic and policy barriers and work toward solutions which will assist Oklahomans in obtaining the skills and education necessary for the career path they desire. This foundational work has the potential to significantly increase Oklahomans' knowledge of resources available and subsequently reduce the current skills gap.

### Wealth Generating Ecosystems

Workforce "Ecosystems", or economic systems in major areas of employment throughout the state, are a systematic way of thinking about Oklahoma's economy. After a comprehensive quantitative analysis of 72 variables and over 48,000 data points, state analysts determined which industries rank the highest in terms of wealth generation and growth potential. From this analysis, five ecosystems that drive wealth in Oklahoma were identified: Aerospace and Defense, Agriculture and Biosciences, Energy, Information and Financial Services, and Transportation and Distribution. Complementary ecosystems, which help to expand wealth in our economy include: Construction, Health Care, Education, and Creative Industries. These complementary ecosystems provide the infrastructure and workforce to support the driver systems in our state's framework and to assist us in policy discussions on how to prioritize our local, and sometimes scarce, resources.

To achieve the ultimate goal of Oklahoma Works, the following statewide objectives have been set:

- **Align and Connect:** Develop, align and connect the education and training pipeline with the needs of the State's regional economies by coordinating strategic priorities and plans across the education and workforce system.
  - To accomplish this objective, the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development will coordinate strategic priorities and plans across education, training and economic agencies to increase alignment of the entire education and training pipeline in support

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<sup>5</sup> Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

<sup>6</sup> Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

of Oklahoma's five wealth generating ecosystems.

- **Data:** Integrate and use workforce and economic development data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success.
  - The Governor's Council for Economic and Workforce Development has created metrics that will be the foundation of the Governor's Council Dashboard. This dashboard will allow the use of data to inform policy, track progress and measure success as an overall statewide measurement.
  - State Workforce Partners, departments and agencies impacting career readiness, are developing metrics for targeted wealth generation.
  - The state launched Oklahoma Works.gov as a comprehensive platform for education and workforce assets statewide including job openings, degree and credential requirements, and relevant education and training programs.
- **Partnerships:** Build partnerships between local industry and education at the regional level.
  - The Governor's Council on Workforce and Economic Development is being empowered to build industry and education partnerships and to generate wealth for Oklahomans.
  - Regional private business leaders regional and State Workforce Partners staff will lead Key Economic Networks (KENs) to provide regional and statewide qualitative data on local economies and foster effective regional partnerships.
  - KEN's will identify local and regional challenges to wealth generation and develop locally based solutions through business leaders, economic development organizations and regional agency partners. Each concern will be presented at monthly State Workforce Partners meetings to find solutions.
- **Resources and Incentives:** Optimize use of resources and incentives to achieve the Oklahoma Works goal.
  - Performance funding for Oklahoma's Higher Education and Career Tech Systems should be prioritized to improve post-secondary outcomes.

- (3) Performance Goals. Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

**\*Oklahoma is operating under previously agreed upon performance accountability measures. Updates to those measures will be made when new guidance is received.**

- (4) Assessment. Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce investment system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

The State Workforce Partners will establish an annual review of funding sources and incentives provided by federal, state and local sources. In addition, the State Workforce Partners will chart the effectiveness of federal and state funding for education, workforce and economic development systems throughout the state.

- (c) **State Strategy.** The Unified State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided Section (a).
- (1) Describe the strategies the State will implement, including sector strategies and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D).

## **OKLAHOMA'S CAREER PATHWAYS FRAMEWORK**

### ***Intended Outcomes of a Career Pathways Initiative:***

- (1) Oklahoma has a comprehensive system in place that leads students, dislocated workers, and incumbent workers through a full range of education and training opportunities that corresponds to employer needs, thus assuring a pipeline of appropriately skilled and credentialed workers for Oklahoma's companies.
- (2) Each State agency, including the Oklahoma State Department of Education (secondary education), CareerTech, and higher education (two-year and four-year institutions), that provides services to potential members of the talent pipeline has policies in place that align with career pathways.

### ***Career Pathways Definition***

The term "career pathway programs" means a clear sequence of employer-validated education coursework and/or training credentials and certifications that include the following components:

- Are aligned with the skill needs of industries important to local, regional, or state economies in which they are located, and reflect the active engagement of employers in targeted industry sectors regarding the skill requirements for employment or career progression in high-demand occupations;
- Include the full range of secondary, adult education, and postsecondary education options, including registered apprenticeship, with a non-duplicative progression of courses clearly articulated from one level of instruction to the next, with opportunities to earn postsecondary credits and lead to industry-recognized and/or postsecondary credentials;
- Include curriculum and instructional strategies that make work a central context for learning (contextual learning) and help students attain work readiness skills;
- Include, as appropriate, integrated education and training that combine occupational skills training with adult education services, give credit for prior learning, and adopt other strategies that accelerate the educational and career advancement of the participant;
- Lead to the attainment of an industry-recognized degree or credential, which may include stackable credentials of value in the labor market and that articulate progressively to higher-level credentials or degrees;
- Help a worker enter or advance within a specific sector or occupational field, regardless of their skills at the point of entry;
- Include academic and career counseling, wrap-around support services particularly at points of transition, and support the development of an individual career plan;

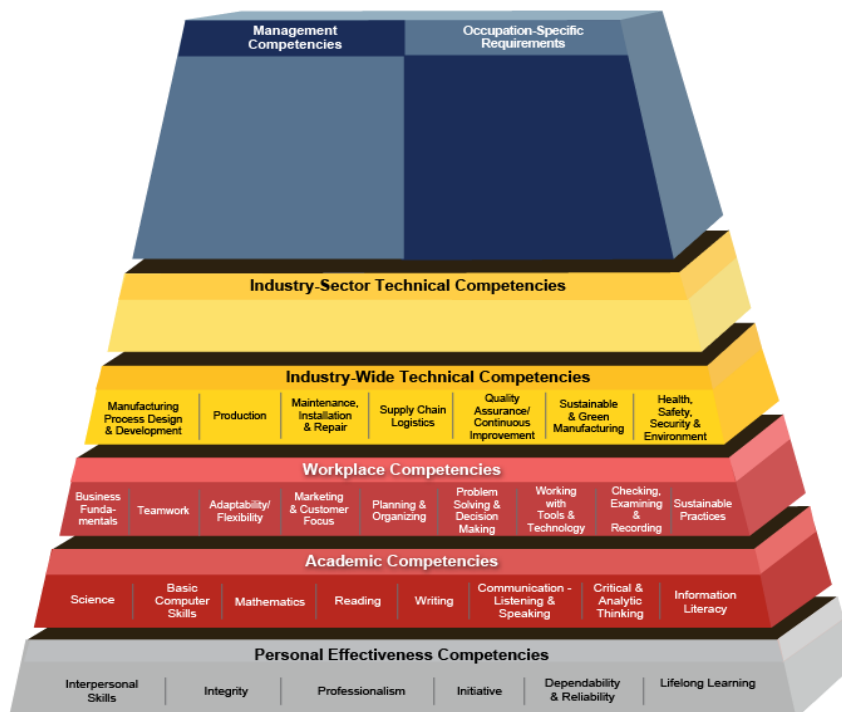
- Are organized to meet the particular needs of adults, including childcare, accommodating work schedules with flexible and non-semester-based scheduling, alternative class times and locations, accessible learning formats, and the innovative use of technology; and,
- Have the goal of increasing an individual's educational and skills attainment and employment outcomes.

### ***Career Pathway Knowledge and Skills Components***

No matter what the occupation or industry, every job requires certain knowledge, skills and competencies, which have been validated by industry designated certifications. A good way to think about the different kinds of knowledge and skills needed is in terms of work readiness competencies:

- Personal effectiveness competencies (aka soft skills);
- Basic academic competencies;
- Workplace competencies;
- Industry-wide and industry-specific technical competencies and certifications; and,
- Occupation-specific knowledge and technical competencies and certifications.

The model below depicts how the components fit together.



At the base of the model, tiers 1 through 3 represent those competencies that provide the foundation for success in school and in the world of work. Employers have identified a link between foundational skills and job performance, as well as the fact that foundational skills are a needed prerequisite for workers to learn new industry-specific skills. These foundational competencies are essential to a large number of occupations and industries.

#### **Tier 1: Personal Effectiveness**

Personal Effectiveness Competencies are shown as hovering below the pyramid because these competencies are essential for all life roles—those roles as a member of a family, of a community, and of the larger society.



They are not exclusive to the competencies needed for a successful career or role in the workplace. They are included here because these competencies also are valued by employers, and are often referred to as "soft skills." Personal effectiveness competencies are generally learned in the home or community and reinforced and honed at school and in the workplace. They represent personal attributes that may present some challenges to teach or assess.

### **Tier 2: Academic Competencies**

At the base of the model are Academic Competencies. This domain contains critical competencies primarily learned in an academic setting, as well as cognitive functions and thinking styles. These competencies are likely to apply to all organizations represented by a single industry or industry association nationwide. They serve as the foundation for Occupation and Industry Specific Competencies.

### **Tier 3: Workplace Competencies**

Tier 3 represents motives and traits, as well as interpersonal and self-management styles. They generally are applicable to a large number of occupations and industries.

Foundational competencies are frequently referred to as ***Work Readiness Competencies***.

### ***The Career Pathways Process Must Include the Following Components***

While the components listed below are sequential to a degree, the process includes lots of movement between all of the components:

- Engage employers and other key stakeholders;
- Determine the industry sector to be addressed and map career pathways of the occupations within the sector;
- Determine corresponding education, training, and certifications needed to get individuals in and then moving through the career pathways;
- Engage partners/collaborators and community members in the implementation and use of pathways;
- Incorporate education, training, and certifications into local and regional education and training programs and service providers, creating systems to support career pathways;
- Create a guidance system in schools and a career navigation system within partner agencies to ensure that students and clients are making decisions using a career pathways approach; and,
- Expand pathways to new industries and occupations.

### ***Career Pathway Collaborators***

Business and Industry  
Students and parents/guardians  
State Department of Education  
K-12 Education  
Adult Education  
After School Network  
CareerTech Education  
Higher Education  
Department of Rehabilitation Services  
Department of Human Services  
Department of Corrections

Oklahoma Employment Security Commission  
WIBs and service providers  
One-stop centers  
Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance  
Veteran's Affairs  
OKAN  
Private staffing agencies  
Professional, trade and labor organizations  
Community based organizations  
Faith-based organizations  
Minority organizations (tribes, hispanic, traditionally

OK Juvenile Justice  
Economic Developers  
Chambers of Commerce  
Regional Econ. Dev. Organizations

black institutions)  
Elected officials – local and state  
ODOC and local chambers  
Private foundations

### ***Deliverables***

- A statewide framework for career pathways is adopted;
- Career pathways are formally integrated into the K-20 education system;
- Effective career pathway practices are part of every student’s education, beginning with career awareness and career exploration in K-8. Before a student enters the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, all students and their parents/guardians in every school receive career counseling assistance that leads to a meaningful individual career and education plan, including requirements needed for post-secondary education;
- Trained career navigators are available in every partner agency to help clients, dislocated workers, and other adults seeking workforce assistance make training and education decisions based on a career pathway model;
- An effective messaging plan is in place to help create awareness and buy-in;
- All regions are working on at least one career pathway;
- In workforce-related state agencies, including all levels of education, policies that support the integration of career pathways are in place and are reviewed on a regular basis;
- Technical assistance and support to regions in their career pathways efforts is provided (i.e., tool kits, process guides, best practices, etc.);
- The National Association of Manufacturing (NAM) Skills Certification System is the basis for all manufacturing career pathway initiatives, including the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC);
- The manufacturing pathways initiative is piloted in one or more regions; and,
- It is understood that this is a “living” document that may be amended as we grow into the Career Pathways Initiative.

***Benefits and outcomes:*** Provide a process for Oklahomans to easily and readily engage in career planning; create bridges from where a person is to where they want to go and enable them to base that decision on solid, real-time market data that guides them toward attaining skills for high-demand occupations and careers; provide clear pathways to post-secondary certificates, credentials, and degrees; provide clear pathways to increase per capita income.

***Metrics:*** Increased number of training programs and institutions that develop curriculum based on career pathways; and increased number of Oklahomans with post-secondary certificates, credentials, and degrees.

- (2) Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, mandatory and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to gaps identified in the State’s workforce analysis.



OKLAHOMA'S "A NEW DAY, NEW WAY"  
Oklahoma Works  
**Executive Summary**

**What is it?**

A process to achieve alignment of education and training programs for the purpose of building a talent pipeline of appropriately skilled and credentialed Oklahoman's to meet the talent demands of Oklahoma employers.

This alignment will serve to ***create, build, and certify*** a comprehensive workforce development ***SYSTEM*** within each region. This system will:

- Create user-friendly, customer-focused service delivery models that will transcend agency programs and silos
- Provide consistent, high-quality services to employers and job seekers throughout the state
- Ensure services to employers and job seekers are consistent, while encouraging local and regional adaptation
- Create a new normal surrounding stellar customer focus, program alignment and partner collaboration.

Each region's ***system*** that will be certified is the "network of mandatory and optional partners, programs, centers and service providers that collectively address the community's workforce development needs."

***To create this workforce development system, partners must***

- ***look at the system holistically;***
- ***look at where their particular agency and its services fit into the larger vision; and,***
- ***commit to jointly producing the tools and processes needed to implement a workforce system.***

The process ***evaluates***:

- how well partners are working together to create a skilled and credentialed talent supply chain to help employers grow and prosper
- Whether a region has built a local workforce development system from all of the local players who provide workforce development services and products to job seekers, trainees, and businesses within the region.

The process ***verifies*** that a region has implemented an effective and comprehensive workforce development ***system strategy*** that includes:

- A ***community-wide unified*** workforce development ***plan*** based on the competency requirements (skills, knowledge, and abilities) needed for current and future local jobs that are key to community growth and prosperity
- A ***common*** workforce development ***vision*** shared by all partners within the community
- ***Common goals*** to reach that vision shared by all partners within the community
- An approach to ***serving job seekers*** that is ***integrated*** across all the partner agencies
- An approach to ***serving businesses*** that is ***integrated*** across all the partner agencies

### **Why is it necessary?**

- Today, employers and job seekers are plagued by a skills mismatch. Communities that can create an effective, on-going talent pipeline that ensures there are workers with the right skills to meet the ever-changing needs of businesses can grow and remain competitive.
- Individual agencies and programs working alone or towards disaggregate goals cannot effectively address all of the workforce needs within the community. Creating a globally competitive community requires the close collaboration of all of the workforce development agencies working together towards common goals.

### **Who is and *must be* involved?**

At a minimum, the following State and local agencies:

- Governor's Council on Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED)
- Local Workforce Development Boards and Staff (LWDBS)
- Oklahoma Adult Basic and Continuing Education (ABE)
- Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education (ODCTE)
- Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC)
- Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
- Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC)
- Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
- Oklahoma Department of Education
- Regional Education Institutions
- Regional Economic Development Entities
- Community and Faith-Based Organizations

### **What are the Benefits?**

- A more effective, consistent, user-friendly, customer-focused, high quality service-delivery approach for Oklahoma citizens and businesses
- Efficiencies for workforce programs and staff
- Alignment among education, workforce, and economic development
- Accountability for services and results
- A maximization of all workforce development resources
- A true competitive advantage for Oklahoma's economic development efforts
- A pipeline for Oklahoma of appropriately skilled and credentialed workers ready to meet the employment needs of Oklahoma employers

The workforce system will be designed to be the springboard to success for Oklahoma's business and job-seekers, helping Oklahoma reach its strategic vision that Oklahoma's workforce development system increases profitability for businesses and increases income for all Oklahomans.

### **III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS**

The Unified State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

(a) **State Strategy Implementation.** The Unified State Plan must include—

- (1) **State Board Functions.** Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

The Governor's Council for Economic and Workforce Development has created metrics that will be the foundation of the Governor's Council Dashboard. This dashboard will allow the use of data to inform policy, track progress and measure success as an overall statewide measurement.

State Workforce Partners, departments and agencies impacting career readiness, are developing metrics for targeted wealth generation.

The state launched OklahomaWorks.gov as a comprehensive platform for education and workforce assets statewide including job openings, degree and credential requirements, and relevant education and training programs.



(2) Implementation of State Strategy. Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in II(c) above. This must include a description of—

Oklahoma plans to pursue the following strategy to improve its workforce:

- Alignment of education and training systems in order to be more responsive to employer needs - (related projects include career pathways; sector strategies; program alignment and service delivery design)
- Expanding the skill levels of Oklahoma's Workforce - (This includes use of Career Readiness Certificates, certified Work ready communities and focus on increased certificates and credentials to ensure that Oklahoma has an appropriately skilled and credentialed workforce.
- Increasing graduation/ retention rates ( projects and emphasis here have included graduation coaches, mentoring, dual enrollment, and regional partnerships thru Certified Work Ready Communities)

(A) *Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy*. Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies.

The State of Oklahoma is anticipating budget challenges, possibly for multiple years. Our focus on resources will bring together workforce system partners to identify similar or duplicative services offered to clients, maximizing the impact of funds allocated to support workforce services within multiple state agencies. The Resources objective will also identify specific avenues for cross-agency solutions. Ultimately, agencies will be empowered to reallocate existing resources to provide a greater range of workforce services to Oklahomans. This effort will also examine opportunities to further leverage private investment in programs and services and to implement formal public-private partnerships.

(B) *Alignment with Activities outside the Plan*. Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by mandatory one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

### **Objective 1: Align and Connect**

Develop, align and connect the education and training pipeline with workers' needs and the needs of the state's regional economies by coordinating strategic priorities and plans across the education and workforce system.

(C) *Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals*. Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and mandatory and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-

centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B). The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

### **Objective 2: DATA**

Integrate and use workforce and economic development data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success.

Effective collection and utilization of education, workforce, and economic data is essential to Oklahoma's ability to decrease the gap between labor supply and demand and generate wealth for all Oklahomans. While numerous data collection mechanisms exist statewide, it is Oklahoma Works' responsibility to bring these streams together where applicable, address gaps, and identify leading indicators and benchmarks for success within the data.

- (D) *Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers.* Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, mandatory and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

### **Objective 3: PARTNERSHIPS**

Build partnerships between local industry and education at the regional level.

The Partnerships objective of Oklahoma Works aims to cultivate engagement and productive relationships among business leaders in the private sector, Oklahoma's education and training systems, and other workforce partners, specifically through Key Economic Networks (KENs) within the state. These strong relationships will facilitate essential knowledge sharing and encourage the alignment of statewide and regional business and industry needs with the skills taught throughout Oklahoma's education system. Each KEN region will work to develop and engage strong private sector relationships in order to help ensure that business and industry workforce needs are heard and met.

- (E) *Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions.* Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's education and training providers, including community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

Oklahoma's education leaders and training providers are a vital part of the state's workforce board. The Governor's Council for Workforce & Economic Development includes the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chancellor of the State Regents for Higher Education, and the Director of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education as key members of its roster.

- (F) *Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access.* Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

#### **Objective 4: RESOURCES**

Optimize use of resources and incentives to achieve the Oklahoma Works goal.

The State of Oklahoma is anticipating budget challenges, possibly for multiple years. Our focus on resources will bring together workforce system partners to identify similar or duplicative services offered to clients, maximizing the impact of funds allocated to support workforce services within multiple state agencies. The Resources objective will also identify specific avenues for cross-agency solutions. Ultimately, agencies will be empowered to reallocate existing resources to provide a greater range of workforce services to Oklahomans. This effort will also examine opportunities to further leverage private investment in programs and services and to implement formal public-private partnerships.

- (G) *Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.* Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

Oklahoma has a substantial skills gap in its workforce. As we look to the year 2020, the state's greatest challenge will be increasing the number of students with workforce credentials or associate degrees, as well as increasing the number of college graduates. Current estimates show a 23-point gap between our current workforce and the skilled workforce we will need by 2020.

#### **Complete College America**

Complete College America (CCA) is the most comprehensive and ambitious higher education initiative ever undertaken by the state of Oklahoma. The goal is to increase the number of degrees and certificates earned in Oklahoma by an average of 1,700 per year, from 30,500 annually in 2011 to 50,900 annually by 2023, a 67 percent increase. This must be done to meet the projected need for additional college-educated workers to keep Oklahoma competitive in a global economy.

Gov. Mary Fallin is a strong advocate for the initiative, saying at the kickoff press conference in September 2011, "We can and must do better in producing a highly skilled and educated workforce in our state. This is part of our agenda – developing the Complete College America program."

More attention must be placed on college completion because Oklahoma's community and economic development depends on developing human capital and preparing citizens for innovation and flexibility in an ever-changing economy.



Oklahoma's five-point plan to increase degree and certificate completion has led CCA to name Oklahoma the national model for degree completion. Our state plan focuses on promoting college readiness, transforming remediation, strengthening pathways to certificates and degrees, expanding adult degree completion efforts, and rewarding performance and completion.

Significant progress is being made toward these goals. In year one of CCA deployment, our public and private colleges and universities reported 2,945 additional graduates than in the previous year, significantly exceeding our average annual goal of 1,700. Additionally, in April 2012, the State Regents, with cooperation and input from our college and university presidents, adopted a new approach to make the higher education funding formula a performance-driven model.

In year two of our CCA initiative, Oklahoma's public and private higher education institutions and career technology w conferred 3,577 additional degrees and certificates, and in year three, again surpassed the average annual goal, conferring 1,842 additional degrees and certificates.

While we have made substantial gains and exceeded these early benchmarks, we acknowledge the growing challenges we face in maintaining this significant momentum. Other CCA states have increased their investment in degree completion initiatives, while Oklahoma has repeatedly surpassed our goals on either flat or reduced budgets.

Five national foundations are providing multiyear support to Complete College America: the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education.

- (H) *Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies.* Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

The Governor's Council for Workforce & Economic Development includes the Secretary of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, the state's lead economic development agency.

To address regional workforce needs, Oklahoma Works establishes nine Key Economic Networks (KENS). Each region has a "business champion," a regional leader from business and industry to coordinate local efforts to support Oklahoma Works.

- (b) **State Operating Systems and Policies** The Unified State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section II **Strategic Elements**. This includes—

- (1) The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies. This must include a description of—
- (A) State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).

Oklahoma uses OKJobMatch.com as its statewide job bank and case-management system. This system is available for job-seekers looking for work in all 77 counties as well as providing employers a place to search for talent and post jobs.

This area is under development. The partners are aware of the priority placed on this area and will continue to pursue available strategies as guidance is issued.

- (B) Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers.

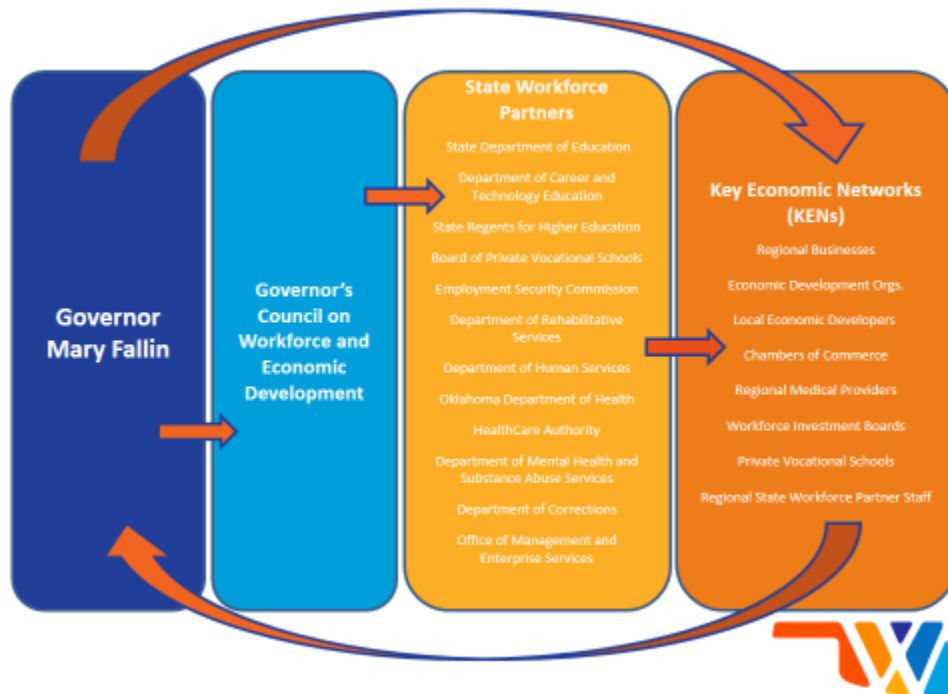
<http://www.ok.gov/okstatestat> provides metrics for the core partners as well as others that are tracked.

- (2) The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes).

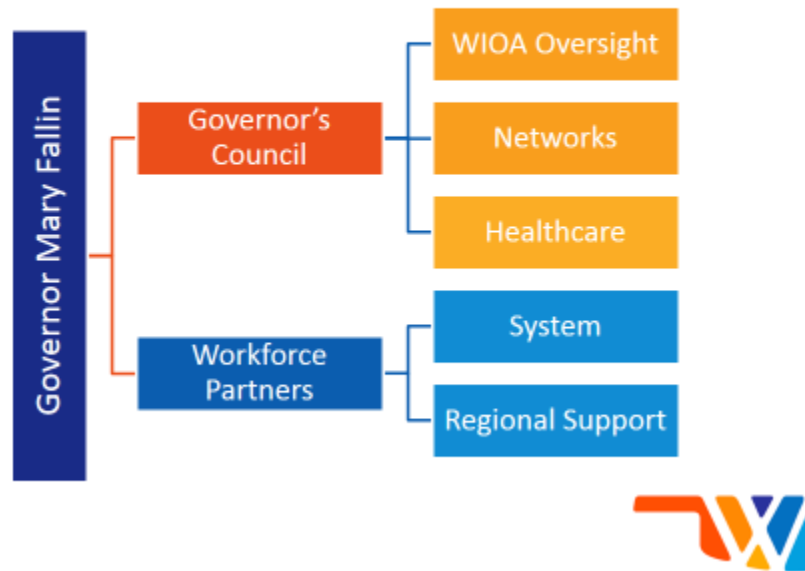
We have engaged the U.S. Department of Labor for technical assistance. Maher & Maher will be working with not only the core partners, but also including combined partners to develop an implementation plan which includes benchmarks as well as roles and responsibilities to address a comprehensive approach to state strategies.

**(3) State Program and State Board Overview.**

- (A) State Agency Organization. Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.



# Governor's Council



- (B) State Board. Provide a description of the State Board, including---
- (i) *Membership Roster*. Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

Governor's Council Membership List

<http://oklahomaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Gov-Council-List.pdf>

- (ii) *Board Activities*. Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

Oklahoma brings together leaders from business, government, education, and non-profit sectors to jointly develop ways to coordinate workforce development with economic development.

The Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development works to develop creative solutions that expand and improve Oklahoma's workforce, providing better jobs for workers and a skilled workforce for business and industry.

## (4) **Assessment of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners.**

- (A) Assessment of Core Programs. Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider.
- (B) Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner program included in the plan will be assessed each year.

The Oklahoma Works System Review Team established in 2012 is comprised of Oklahoma workforce development system partners, GCWED, Career Tech, Adult Basic Ed, Vocational Rehab, Dept. of Human Services, Wagner-Peyser (OESC), Higher Regents and Commerce representing Title 1 programs, Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth. They hope to add entities such as Dept. of Corrections, Mental Health and Oklahoma State Dept. of Health in order to establish a more comprehensive approach to create solutions

Members are Donnalla Miller, GCWED private sector; Jeane Burruss, GCWED staff, Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development; Lance Allee, ABE; LeAnne Bruce-Boone, DHS; Scott Myers, CDBG; Marshall Vogts, CSBG; Rob Gragg, DRS; DeAnna Smith, Wagner-Peyser, OESC; Joe Robinson, Career Tech; Debbie Blanke, Regents and, Erin Risley-Baird, Oklahoma Works, and Tina Hicks, Oklahoma Department of Corrections, and Buffy Heater, Oklahoma Health Care Authority.

This team has been a cohesive unit since Governor Fallin recognized the necessity to reinvent the wheel and build a new responsive workforce development system to meet the need of Oklahoma's businesses and create wealth for our entire state.

At the present time they are involved in exploring policies and processes that will continue to build this holistic system in wake of the new WIOA implementation as well as contribute to our overall economic well-being. Being responsive to whatever model agreed upon by our state is their main goal. They meet on a regular basis and identify program specific barriers and create solutions to move forward. Most of the local areas are in the process of building partnerships to accomplish their version of the utopian system and require guidance from this team; discovering they feel very comfortable requesting assistance from their peers representing their agency.

One of the major hurdles they are trying to tackle at this point is the requirement to have a Memorandum of Understanding at a state and local level addressing service delivery and resource sharing. Under the new law the requirements will change from the past documents and definitions will have to be created specific to our state. For example, the MOU documents in the past have not been as effective or binding as hoped and are exploring possibilities around requiring MOU contracts instead for more impact. Resource and cost sharing is always a plug puller when it comes to the negotiating tables and they are attempting to make this a win/win for all and keep the table fully populated. The new law requires we have viable processes in place to address cost and resource sharing and if this is not accomplished it can bring with it consequences for the system.

#### **What are the Benefits according to this team?**

- A more effective, consistent, user-friendly, customer-focused, high quality service-delivery approach for Oklahoma citizens and businesses
- Efficiencies for workforce programs and staff
- Alignment among education, workforce, and economic development
- Accountability for services and results
- A maximization of all workforce development resources
- A true competitive advantage for Oklahoma's economic development efforts
- A pipeline for Oklahoma of appropriately skilled and credentialed workers ready to meet the employment needs of Oklahoma employers

The workforce system being designed will be the springboard to success for Oklahoma's business and jobseekers, helping Oklahoma reach its strategic vision that Oklahoma's workforce development system increases profitability for businesses and increases income for all Oklahomans.

- (C) Previous Assessment Results. Provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner program included in the plan during the preceding 2-year period. Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

Strategies will be adapted based on these assessments.

**(5) Distribution of Funds for Core Programs.** Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

- (A) For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

- (i) Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),
- (ii) Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),
- (iii) Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

- (B) For Title II: ABE

- (i) Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

ODCTE will release a yearly grant extension application for Federal Workforce Investment Act Title II for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Services to current providers. Each eligible organization desiring an extension shall submit an extension application containing information and assurances such as ODCTE may require, including a:

- 1. Description of how funds awarded under AEFLA will be spent.
- 2. Description of cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with local one-stop shops and other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities.
- 3. Transition plan detailing the implementation of the required WIOA act.

- (ii) Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

The Lifelong Learning Section of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education will seek proposals to provide Adult Education and Literacy services in the desired regions. Federal funding will be provided by Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

A minimum of two applicants will be selected for review. Grant awards will range depending on the availability of federal and state funds. Applicants must complete the Adult Education and Literacy Funding Application and provide a response to narrative questions, a narrative budget, and a proposed budget.

Applications for funding may be obtained by contacting the Lifelong Learning Office at the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education.

(C) Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (OKDRS) is the single Designated State Unit for these funds. OKDRS is a combined agency, no distribution is required.

**(6) Program Data**

- (A) Data Alignment and Integration. Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.
- (i) Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.
  - (ii) Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.
  - (iii) Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across mandatory one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.
  - (iv) Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

**OKStateStat**

OKStateStat is Oklahoma's performance transparency website. Oklahoma is launching a new performance management approach that will enable leaders to better assess progress over time and provide transparency to the citizens of Oklahoma. Under the leadership of Gov. Mary Fallin and her cabinet, the state has charted its strategy by crafting 5 statewide goals and underlying statewide programs. These programs cut across agency and cabinet areas and generally include the efforts of more than one agency to achieve defined objectives. Oklahoma has defined cross-agency strategic priorities and set high-level performance objectives to measure its success. There are over 50 statewide programs that contain over 160 strategic objectives, which have established the performance framework of the state.

Oklahoma's performance informed budgeting initiative aligns financial resources to state priorities and measurable outcomes. It enables leaders to better assess progress over time, tie budgeting to results, and provide transparency to citizens. As a part of the budget cycle, agencies are aligning their budgets to statewide programs – strategic priorities of the state. The programs are in turn aligned to high-level strategic objectives. By aligning budget to performance and dollars spent, progress made can be seen in the same place at the same time. The first dashboard with both statewide performance and financial information will be released in 2016. For the first time, Oklahomans will have a global picture of how state government is using their resources to achieve meaningful results.

For more information visit [www.ok.gov/okstatestat](http://www.ok.gov/okstatestat).

*Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with States to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.*

- (B) Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success. Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

The State Workforce Partners will establish an annual review of funding sources and incentives provided by federal, state and local sources. In addition, the State Workforce Partners will chart the effectiveness of federal and state funding for education, workforce and economic development systems throughout the state.

- (C) Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data. Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

The state is currently working on MOUs with core partners as well as reviewing state statutes to allow for data sharing among core partners.

- (D) Privacy Safeguards. Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

To protect personally identifiable information collected in OKJobMatch and ServiceLink, OKJobMatch has implemented security measures. These include limiting the people who have physical access to our database servers, installing electronic security using 128 byte encryption SSL and individual password protection to guard against unauthorized access for all accounts. Only the user or third parties to which the user has provided a password can access the user's account.

- (7) **Priority of Service for Veterans.** Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

Governor Fallin has indicated her strong support of efforts to support returning and transitioning service members, veterans and their families. A special committee was formed consisting of cross agency members who worked on various efforts to coordinate services and to plan hiring events for returning military personnel and their families.

In support of this effort, OSU-OKC and the Governor's Council launched a website (OKmilitaryconnection.com) to connect veterans with a variety of state and national resources and services; especially hiring events sponsored by OKmilitaryconnection.com. This site will be expanded and enhanced over time, and it will ultimately be a key part of the OK-WDES.

The State is also working with employer councils, trade associations, the State Chamber, local chambers, state and federal agencies and education/training providers to connect transitioning service members, veterans and other eligible persons with quality training and employment. Efforts are also under way with Oklahoma's CareerTech technology centers, community colleges, and four-year institutions to develop fast-track credentialing and degree programs that offer credit for experience gained during military service.

In Oklahoma, veterans and others eligible for services under Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSGs) are identified at various points of entry into Oklahoma's workforce development system. All customers so identified receive priority of service. Through an assessment process, eligible veteran customers also determined to have significant barriers to employment or designated as eligible by the U.S. Department of Labor are referred for services to a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) where available. Those veterans served at Centers lacking an assigned DVOP are referred for services to other Workforce Center staff.

All local office staff and workforce system partners performing labor exchange through the current Oklahoma electronic workforce system are required to provide veterans and other eligible persons with priority of service. Close monitoring through system reports, field visits, and training is conducted to ensure legislative requirements for veterans are followed.

The State assures that veterans and others eligible for JVSG-funded services will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in section 134 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and the activities authorized in Chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 U.S.C. The State assures that it will comply with the veterans priority established in the Job for Veterans Act



(Public Law 107-288). The State and the Veterans Employment and Training Service have a memorandum of understanding to ensure services will be provided to veterans as described in Title 38 U.S.C., Chapters 41, 42 and 43; at 20 CFR Chapter IX, CFR, codified at 20 CFR 1001, 100; and all applicable Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) and Veterans' Program Letters (VPLs).

- (8) **Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System.** Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

### **Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System**

Oklahoma is focused upon accessibility for all job seekers and businesses and employer's work sites throughout all levels of Oklahoma Works. Working with the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED), system partners bring sharper focus on developing and employing more Oklahoman's with disabilities.

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services is leading Oklahoma's Workforce System towards enhanced accessibility. The objective is to provide equitable services to individuals with disabilities and to ensure that all Workforce System partners comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

#### **Access for All Initiative**

The Access for All initiative within Oklahoma Works places a focus on recruitment, hiring, and promotion of individuals with disabilities in the state of Oklahoma's workforce. Access for All focuses on the Oklahoma Works system partners as well as employers in the state. This initiative provides training, consulting, and resources to ensure that individuals with disabilities are intentionally included in efforts to achieve greater household wealth for Oklahomans. Access for All equips Oklahoma's Workforce System with knowledge and resources to make it more accessible to individuals with disabilities that utilize one-stop system programs in person, on the phone, or through the web. Access for All is brought to Oklahoma Works through a partnership between the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (Oklahoma's Vocational Rehabilitation Program) and Oklahoma ABLE Tech (Oklahoma's Assistive Technology Act Program).

To help build a foundation for the Access for All initiative, the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (OKDRS) and Oklahoma ABLE Tech (OKABT), partnered to provide regional Access for All academies, webinars, newsletters, and weekly tips statewide. The one-day seminars focused on accessibility in the built environment and in technology, as well as some of the legal drivers to create accessible points of contact between workforce system partners and job seekers in Oklahoma. These academies are critical training components to help staff close the gaps in workforce utilization, income, and poverty among people with disabilities. To best prepare job seekers to gain employment, workforce system staff must be aware of the benefits and requirements for ensuring accessible workforce services and environments. The academies help

workforce system staff focus on the requirements for better employer engagement and promoting physical and programmatic accessibility to employment and training services for individuals with disabilities.

The Access for All webinar series will bring focus on accessibility, legal, policy, and technology as they relate to job seekers with disabilities. Topics will include: An Overview of the Access for All Initiative in Oklahoma; Technology Accessibility 101: An Introduction to Accessibility in the Web; Accessibility Basics in Microsoft Word 2010; Basic Technology Accessibility Testing; An Overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; and Workforce Center Structural Accessibility Toolkit Update.

The Access for All weekly tips and newsletters are scheduled emails to workforce system partners that will provide continued coverage and the most current accessibility information regarding physical and programmatic accessibility, including assistive technology.

### **Oklahoma Employment Security Commission – Modeling the way to “Thinking Accessibility”**

The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC), through the Oklahoma Works centers, strive to expand capacity, enhance partnerships, and improve service delivery to improve training and employment opportunities and outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed, and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits. Staff work daily with a variety of partners locally and across the state that provide services to individuals with disabilities and the general population either directly at the Oklahoma Works centers or through referrals to partner facilities.

These partners include education/training institutions; employers; healthcare, mental health, and childcare facilities; faith-based organizations; community-based non-profits; legal assistance providers; and other state and federal agencies, such as the Department of Rehabilitation Services (OKDRS), Veterans Administration, Department of Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Corrections. Many of these linkages are formal and codified in memorandums of understanding.

OESC works to develop and support increased employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Oklahoma Works center staff routinely refer individuals with disabilities to the OKDRS for more intensive training and job placement opportunities. OKDRS has three certified Social Security Administration (SSA) Work Incentive Counselors working and co-located within Workforce Centers and another three rotating between the remainder of the Workforce Centers and OKDRS offices.

Workforce Center staff and OKDRS Benefits Planners collaborate to assist job seekers receiving SSA benefits. Specifically, when referred by center staff, an OKDRS Benefits Planner will explain the importance of working at the highest possible level and above SSA's Substantial Gainful Activity benchmark. Job seekers are provided general information concerning the impact of work on SSA disability benefits. Upon applying for VR services, these individuals would then also receive detailed reports illustrating the impact of work on other benefits and services the individual may be receiving, such as TANF, SNAP, UI compensation, Veteran's benefits, etc. OKDRS Benefits Planners address concerns of individuals with disabilities about the possibility of losing benefits and help them understand and maximize their work incentives.

OESC began a two-phase project focusing upon physical and programmatic accessibility entitled “Thinking Accessibility” within the Workforce Centers, UI Service Centers, UI Adjudication Centers and the Appeal Tribunal. This partnership brings OKDRS and OKABT together to provide the resources and tools to assist OESC on continuing their commitment in serving individuals with disabilities.

### **Phase 1 – “Thinking Accessibility”**

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Assistive Technology Specialists, conducted physical accessibility reviews of all Workforce Centers statewide. The physical site accessibility review instrument included an assessment of parking area(s) and pathway(s), entrance(s), bathroom(s), water fountain(s), public telephones, and fire alarm systems. Final assessment reports were provided to each OESC Program Manager III and the center director of the Workforce Centers for final discussions and understanding of findings.

The OKABT program created individual Accessibility Toolkits for each Workforce Center in the state along with the UI Service Centers, UI Adjudication Centers and the Appeal Tribunal. The Accessibility Toolkit abstracted findings from the physical accessibility reviews conducted by OKDRS, and added suggested remedies and, where feasible, possible expected costs associated with the suggested remedies. Each Toolkit includes the full itemized set of findings and suggested remedies as well as a summary report for each area. The Toolkits will serve as the foundation for an ongoing effort to make the state's Workforce Centers and OESC offices more accessible to job seekers with disabilities.

As OESC reviews the Accessibility Toolkits, both OKDRS and OKABT will be available to provide additional guidance and technical assistance. This will help OESC finalize budgets, coordinate efforts, and create timelines for remediation where suggested in the Accessibility Toolkit.

## **Phase 2 – “Thinking Accessibility”**

The OKDRS and OKABT will provide a focused effort to work with OESC to identify ways to improve accessibility of technology resources that it provides to job seekers in the state. OKABT will first work to analyze information and communication technology procurement and development within OESC, then identify and help to narrow gaps identified in this analysis. Over time, OKABT will help OESC to create and maintain a technology accessibility program that ensures the continuing delivery of accessible technology solutions to Oklahoma's job seekers.

OKABT will assist OESC to assure accessibility of a new website through assessment, consultation, or other means, and to assure that accessibility is part of their technology procurement process by utilizing the Technology Accessibility Program Review. This review is performed to identify key technology tools and resources for job seekers and internal audiences using the Technology Accessibility Integration Plan which will identify and prioritize technology tools such as web applications, website, documents, and/or multimedia, identify owners and managers of identified tools, formulate basis for technology accessibility training and technical assistance, identify relevant practitioners and leadership for focused training, assess tools for accessibility, and assist in technology barrier removal.

### **Oklahoma Adult Education Program – serving individuals with disabilities**

Adults with disabilities fall into two major categories: individuals with physical disabilities and individuals with learning disabilities. Strategies for adults with physical disabilities will include ensuring that classroom sites are accessible and that reasonable and appropriate accommodations are made for the individual's disability. Adult secondary students who may need accommodations on the high school equivalency test will be referred to OKDRS, psychologists, or other resources to obtain the required documentation of a learning disability.

Adults with learning disabilities usually possess an information processing dysfunction which interferes with their ability to acquire, remember, and/or retrieve information. Strategies for adults with both learning and physical disabilities include, training for adult education teachers on teaching adults with learning and other disabilities.

The Oklahoma Adult Education (ABE) program is in its fourth year of an intensive training effort in teaching adults with learning disabilities and other learning differences. This training prepares adult education teachers to use the ten-minute interview and the Payne Learning Needs Inventory to identify the learning strengths and needs of students, to identify accommodations, when needed, and how to use appropriate instructional strategies with adults with disabilities. A key strategy which teachers learn is how to become “co-investigators” with the student into the learning process. Adult education teachers were trained as “trainers” and are conducting regional teacher training workshops to help other teachers learn how to more effectively meet the needs of educationally-disadvantaged adults with disabilities.

### **Business and Employer Outreach**

Oklahoma’s Workforce System recognizes opportunities to reach Oklahoma’s businesses and employers with a powerful message of Access for All. Through relationships old and new, OKDRS and OKABT will lead the workforce partners in working to arrange and deliver training to businesses and employers that will reduce their hesitation to hire job seekers with disabilities and to identify ways to educate about the benefits of directly recruiting and hiring job seekers with disabilities. The creation of fact sheets and other concise deliverables will help businesses and employers to understand not only their obligations, but also the importance of hiring and promoting job seekers with disabilities.

OKDRS utilizes its ADA Coordinator as a resource to provide consultation, technical assistance, and site reviews to identify accessibility issues to all workforce system partners and other agencies, entities, and businesses and employers. The OKDRS ADA Coordinator provides training in various aspects of the Americans with Disability Act and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design to staff and supervisors of these entities as well. These services are available in order to advance the promotion of equal access for individuals with disabilities in programs, services, and buildings statewide.

OKDRS delivers assistive technology for job seekers in their journey to employment. Assistive technology specialists complete a variety of different assistive technology assessments and evaluations for job seekers, business work sites, and system partners. The types of evaluations are home modifications, vehicle modifications, personal mobility needs, computer access, worksite modifications, activities of daily living, communication school accommodations, and accessibility reviews. Assistive technology specialists focus on the reported obstacle, rather than the disability diagnosis. A big part of an assistive technology evaluation is to identify what the real problem or obstacle is for the individual job seeker or business work site.

### **One-stop system certification policy standards for accessibility**

Oklahoma’s Workforce System commitment on enhanced accessibility will continue by ‘Thinking Accessibility’ while serving individuals with disabilities. The “Accessibility = Access for All” within the Oklahoma Works workforce system, is a standard that has been set to springboard success for Oklahoma’s business and employers and job seekers in reaching Oklahoma’s Goal of Wealth Generation.

The one-stop system standards and certification criteria policy will be designed utilizing the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) for physical accessibility. The Oklahoma Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Law and Standards will be applied for accessibility of digital services. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Levels A and AA, will be utilized for websites, web applications, and digital documents certification criteria and standards.

Ensuring opportunities for all is critical to meet the goal in creating an environment where people with disabilities have the same opportunities to participate in the workforce as do people without disabilities. As

businesses and employers find that the labor pool is tightening, following through on these criteria and standards will ensure businesses and employers have access to more qualified people to fill needed positions.

**IV. COORDINATION WITH COMBINED STATE PLAN PROGRAMS.** If the State is submitting a Combined State Plan, describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination of the core programs and the other programs and activities covered by the Combined State Plan.

*Not applicable*

**V. COMMON ASSURANCES (for all core programs)**

<b>The State Plan must include assurances that:</b>	
1.	The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;
2.	The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;
3.	The lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;
4.	<p>(a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, and the general public, and that the Unified State Plan is available and accessible to the general public;</p> <p>(b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;</p>
6.	The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs to carry out workforce investment activities under chapters 2 and 3 of subtitle B;
7.	The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, as applicable;
8.	The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;
9.	The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;
10.	The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);

11.	Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and
12.	The State will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; that such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, that the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.





and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.

- (C) Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.
- (D) Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.

The Workforce and Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates that the Governor’s Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED) (or “State board”) shall assist the Governor in initial designation of Workforce Areas, as required in Section 106, and that an appeals process is in place.

The Governor of the State shall designate local workforce development areas within the State:

- (i) Through consultation with the State board; and
- (ii) After consultation with chief elected officials and after consideration of comments received through the public comment process as described in Section 102(b)(2)(E)(iii)(II).

WIOA further states that the considerations should include the following:

- (i) The extent to which the areas are consistent with the labor market areas in the State;
- (ii) The extent to which the areas are consistent with regional economic development areas in the State; and
- (iii) The extent to which the areas have available the Federal and non-Federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under subtitle B and other applicable provisions of the Act, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools.

WIOA states that a unit of general local government (including a combination of such units) or grant recipient that requests, but is not granted designation of an area as a local area, may submit an appeal to the State board under an appeal process established in the State plan.

#### Initial Local Area Designation

As stated in WIOA section 106, the Governor shall approve a request made for initial designation by any local area if, during Program Years (PYs) 2012 and 2013, the local area:

- (1) was designated as a local area under WIA;
- (2) performed successfully; and
- (3) sustained fiscal integrity.

Initial designation is effective July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017. Local areas must apply for initial designation using the process included in this directive. Local areas that would like to modify their current geographical boundaries are eligible to apply under their new structure. (See Attachment 2 – Modified Local Area Application for Initial Local Area Designation.)

Subsequent designation will be effective July 1, 2017. Therefore, during the initial designation period, local areas should be planning and preparing to meet the WIOA requirements for subsequent designation [i.e., perform successfully, sustain fiscal integrity, and in the case of a local area in the planning region, meet the regional planning requirements in WIOA section 106(c)(1)]. Additionally, local areas should be preparing to meet the new Office of Management of Budget (OMB) Omni-Circular regulations which apply to new awards and additional funding (funding increments) to existing awards made after December 26, 2014, (i.e., the youth allocations beginning April 1, 2015, and all subsequent allocations).

## Definitions

**Performed Successfully** – A local area has achieved at least 80 percent of their local performance goal on each performance measure for PYs 2012 and 2013.

**Sustained Fiscal Integrity** – The local area has not been found in violation of one or more of the following during PYs 2012 or 2013:

- (1) Final determination finding(s) from audits, evaluations, or other reviews conducted by State or local governmental agencies or the Department of Labor identifying issues of fiscal integrity or misexpended funds due to the willful disregard or failure to comply with any WIA requirement, such as failure to grant priority of service or verify participant eligibility: or
- (2) Gross negligence – defined as a conscious and voluntary disregard of the need to use reasonable care, which is likely to cause foreseeable grave injury or harm to persons, property, or both; or
- (3) Any failure to observe accepted standards of administration. Local areas must adhere to the uniform administrative requirements set forth in Title 2 CFR Part 200, and Title 29 CFR Parts 95 and 97. Local areas must have fully met their federally mandated responsibilities for the two previous program years (PY 2012 and PY 2013) and including timely reporting of WIA participant and expenditure data, timely completion and submission of the required annual single audit, and have not been placed on cash hold for longer than 30 days. [In alignment with WIOA Section 106(e)(2).]

## DESIGNATION:

WIOA requires that existing federally recognized workforce areas are designated during the first two program years, which is referred to as Initial Designation, and again after the first two program years, which is referred to as Subsequent Designation. Units of general local government that desire to become a new (Attachment 1) or new modified (Attachment 2) local workforce area should follow the WIOA Designation for New Areas requirements in section B.

**A. INITIAL WIOA DESIGNATION FOR EXISTING REGIONS:** Existing workforce regions operating in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 may request initial designation as a Local Workforce Development Area if they have performed successfully and sustained fiscal integrity. An area seeking initial designation must address the following:

1. Submit a completed application to the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development by close of business July 15, 2015.
2. The completed application must include Attachment 1 which provides evidence that the area, in program years 2012 and 2013, met or exceeded the agreed upon adjusted levels of performance for the Common Measures, as defined by existing performance agreements, and was not subject to the sanctions process resulting from missing the same measure two years in a row.
3. Provide assurance that during program years 2012 or 2013, the U.S. Secretary of Labor, or the State in place of the Secretary, has not made a formal determination that the grant recipient or administrative entity for the local area has misexpended funds due to willful disregard, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.
4. Provide evidence that the area, in program years 2012 and 2013, was committed to providing quality service through continuous improvement efforts and implemented plans that supported sector partnerships or career pathways; or enhanced services to employers or outreach efforts to the local community. Progress

reports submitted to the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD) on annual plans for the years will serve as sufficient data.

The OOWD will recommend approval to the Governor of a local area's request that satisfies these requirements in accordance with WIOA Section 106(b)(2). Initial designation as a local area will remain valid until June 30, 2017.

**B. WIOA DESIGNATION FOR NEW AREAS:** Any unit of general local government may request designation as a Local Workforce Development Area under WIOA. Modified Local Area Designations for Initial Designation (Attachment 2) will only become effective on July 1 of the next program year. In order for designation to be approved for the start of the next program year, the following steps and timeline must be met.

1. A Modified Local Area Application (Attachment 2) must be submitted to the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD) no later than February 15, 2016. The OOWD will work with the requesting area to determine the deadline for the full request.
2. The application must clearly outline the circumstances for the request of designation.
3. The application must also address and explain how the following criteria are met:
  - a. Consistency with natural labor market areas
  - b. Consistency with regional economic development areas
  - c. Existence of education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and career and technical education schools in the area.

#### **ACTION:**

The Chief Local Elected Official must submit the completed application for Initial Designation to the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development, Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development, no later than July 15, 2015 to:

**Mail:** Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development  
900 N. Portland Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73107

**Email:** [deidre.myers@okstate.edu](mailto:deidre.myers@okstate.edu)

#### **Assessment of the Application for Initial Designation:**

Once a completed application is received, the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development Workforce System Oversight Committee (WSOC), in collaboration with the appropriate staff from the OOWD will verify the information provided in the application. The WSOC will use the results of this assessment to determine whether to recommend approval or denial of the application.

The CLEO will be notified in writing by July 30, 2015 regarding the approval or denial of its initial designation application. If approved, the initial designation will be effective July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017. If denied, the CLEO may contest the decision using the appeal process below.

#### **Appeal Process for Initial Designation:**

An area or areas seeking to be designated as a Local Workforce Development Area, which has requested but has been denied its request for initial designation as a Local Area, may appeal the decision to the Governor's

Council for Workforce and Economic Development, Workforce System Oversight Committee (WSOC) and request a hearing by the following process:

1. An appeal and request for a hearing must be mailed to the (WSOC) within 20 calendar days from the mailing date of the notice of denial of initial designation.
2. The appeal must be in writing and contain a specific statement of the grounds upon which the appeal is sought and, must state the reasons why the appellant should be initially designated.
3. Within five (5) calendar days of the receipt of the appeal, the WSOC will contact the appellant to schedule a hearing date. The hearing will be scheduled within five (5) calendar days.
4. The WSOC will conduct the appeal hearing process and provide a written decision to the appellant no later than five (5) calendar days after the hearing. The approval or denial will be sent as a recommendation to the Governor.
5. The final decision rests with the Governor.

#### Appeal of Workforce System Oversight Committee Decision:

An area seeking to be designated as a Local Workforce Development Area, which has requested and has been denied its request for initial or subsequent designation by the WSOC, may also appeal the denial to the U.S. Department of Labor. [WIOA Section 106 (b)(5)] This second level of appeal must be sent within 14 days to:

Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitutional Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20210

A copy of the appeal must also be provided to the:

ETA Regional Administrator  
U.S. Department of Labor  
525 S. Griffin Street  
Dallas, TX 75202

#### *(2) Statewide Activities.*

- (A) Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.
- (B) Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers
- (C) *In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.*

#### Rapid Response

The Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD) assumes responsibility for all statewide Rapid Response efforts. These activities are provided as part of a comprehensive workforce investment system designed to respond quickly when a mass layoff and/or plant closure appears imminent. Staff members at OOWD and the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) respond quickly to employer, employee

and community needs when a mass layoff and/or plant closure appears imminent. The objective of Rapid Response is to help workers transition from notification of layoff to re-employment as soon as possible.

Oklahoma maintains a database of WARN notices to track mass layoffs and plant closings. This database captures the number of workers laid off, the reason for layoff, presence of a labor union, and tracks the services provided to the employers and affected workers. This information is available to the public at [www.okjobmatch.com](http://www.okjobmatch.com).

The Rapid Response Team performs the following duties:

- Coordinates activities with the Unemployment Insurance staff and those in the worker adjustment program;
- Ensures the prompt and appropriate targeting of additional assistance to local WIBs for basic readjustment and retraining services;
- Assures that local resource providers such as CareerTech and higher education entities are a part of the Rapid Response effort;
- Ensures Rapid Response activities are carried out in local areas, and works in conjunction with Local WIBs and chief elected officials in those areas;
- Provides prompt additional assistance to local areas that experience disasters, mass layoffs or plant closings, or other events that precipitate substantial increases in the number of unemployed individuals;
- Provides technical assistance to local areas to increase coordination of other available resources such as NAFTA-TAA and Pell Grants.

When the layoff or closure involves organized labor, Rapid Response works closely with organized labor representatives in conducting Rapid Response activities. Oklahoma's Rapid Response Team works extremely well and creates a dynamic partnership that provides for quick and effective information and services for affected workers.

Rapid Response funds are used at the state level by OOWD and OESC. They are set aside for emergencies, or for when all allocated resources are expended. The local areas are involved as a part of the Rapid Response Team, but Rapid Response funds aren't allocated to local workforce boards. Rapid Response funds may be used by local workforce boards through application for emergency funding as needed for specific layoff events.

The vast majority of companies in Oklahoma don't fall under the WARN Act provisions, so most aren't required to file a WARN notification. Notices of impending layoffs received from these employers are informal in nature. These may include telephone calls from local elected officials, local workforce area service providers, economic development professionals, the employer, or the affected workers themselves. The affected workers in this situation are also offered Rapid Response services.

Once the State receives notification of an impending layoff, the information is recorded into a database and plans for Rapid Response service provision begins. A telephone call or personal visit is made to the company to set up employee meetings with Rapid Response staff. The team makes every effort to work with the employer to set up meetings during the affected workers' shift so workers can continue to be paid while learning about the various services available.

This often results in Rapid Response meetings during the wee hours of the morning, on weekends, and late in the evenings. If it isn't possible to conduct Rapid Response meetings on company time, then the workers are

notified by announcement at the workplace and/or through the news media of the time and place for the meetings.

A team of workforce and other service providers give information to affected workers at all Rapid Response meetings. Workers are given printed information about Unemployment Insurance, services provided by the local Oklahoma Works Center, programs available to dislocated workers, tips for job searches – including resume development and interviewing skills, community services like consumer credit counseling, healthcare, and childcare, access to websites, and physical locations of local Oklahoma Works centers. Workers are told which documentation they will need to register for Oklahoma Works and Unemployment Insurance programs/benefits, and they are given an approximate timetable on how quickly services can be provided. In many cases, job fairs are scheduled and held for the affected workers notified.

Employers are also informed at Rapid Response meetings about the many business services available through the state's workforce system. Because of this, downsizing businesses use the system to assess, screen, and hire workers as their situations change and they are able to re-staff and/or expand. There are also numerous instances when companies scale back layoffs because they now know about the number of free services available that can cut costs and still leave workers employed.

Because receipt of a WARN notice is not sufficient, in most cases, for helping to avert a layoff, Oklahoma is currently working on a layoff aversion plan that will provide a policy framework from which services can be provided holistically to reduce layoffs, and to help dislocated workers get back to work more quickly.

The project goals are to:

- Identify and validate existing relevant programs, services, and initiatives as effective tools for Lay-off Aversion (LoA)/Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E);
- Identify programs, services, and initiatives that are missing;
- Organize programs, services, and initiatives into an interconnected system for BR&E/LoA; and,
- Develop a comprehensive BR&E/LoA plan that illustrates how all partners contribute to retaining and growing jobs in Oklahoma

A key part of this project will be to validate that the Oklahoma's workforce strategies identified in this plan will be effective as lay-off aversion tools.

Ultimately, Oklahoma's workforce system will ensure that we have the business intelligence necessary to understand employer needs. Also, the system will ensure that we are creating the talent pipeline necessary to provide the skills and credentials demanded by employers and needed by Oklahomans to enter the labor market or return to the labor market as quickly as possible.

*In the event of a natural disaster or other calamity the Rapid Response service team will work with affected employers and workers to identify their needs. We are also prepared to coordinate those efforts with FEMA. Oklahoma is no stranger to natural disasters in recent years including devastating tornadoes, wildfires, and ice storms.*

Applicable state policies can be found at the link below:

<http://oklahomaworks.gov/rapidresponse/>

- (D) Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed.

(Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.

#### Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA):

Oklahoma's workforce system provides the entire array of services to dislocated workers through a multi-agency Rapid Response Team anchored by the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development and the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC). This team works closely with employers, workers, economic development professionals, representatives from a variety of local and state public agencies, and local chambers to initiate services and provide information to those most recently affected by plant or facility closings.

Unemployment Insurance, access to Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) benefits, training and employment placement, and core and intensive supportive services are provided as needed and as determined by the individual assessments conducted. The team strives to make dislocated workers aware of their transferable skills and place them in jobs at the highest replacement wage as quickly as possible.

#### Early Intervention

OESC manages Oklahoma's TAA program and all TAA petitions file through that agency. OESC's involvement with the state's Rapid Response Team ensures that when TAA petitions are filed, the team is notified immediately and can spring into action to assist the employers and workers affected.

#### Co-Enrollment, Assessments, and Employer-Driven Skills Development

Oklahoma Works one-stop center staff often dual enroll dislocated workers/TAA applicants. All applicants seeking services under the TAA program are referred to the Dislocated Worker program for core, intensive, and/or training services. The total cost of training is paid for by TAA funds, Dislocated Worker funds, or a combination of both. Consolidation and collaboration among functions (functional integration) in Oklahoma Works centers enables seamless, efficient service delivery.

Center staff members use WorkKeys assessments as well as labor market data from EMSI and OKJobMatch.com, the state's online labor market exchange tool, to determine an individual worker's skill level, the high-demand occupations in the area, and where the two might meet for successful employment.

The WorkKeys assessments are available in hundreds of sites across the state, including all Oklahoma Works one-stop centers, CareerTech technology centers, community colleges, public libraries, other public agency service locations, and throughout the secondary education system. The use of WorkKeys, KeyTrain, and the state's Career

Readiness Certificates ensure that dislocated workers and all entering the workforce system are being guided to acquire applied skills vital to Oklahoma's employers.

Further, the Governor's Council has long embraced sector strategies as a way to ensure that the skills being developed across the state meet the needs of employers within specific locales, regions, and industries.

**(b) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements**

- (1) *Alternative Training Models*. If the State is utilizing alternative training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.
- (2) *Registered Apprenticeship*. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.
- (3) *Training Provider Eligibility Procedure*. Provide the procedure for determining training provider eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

New providers may seek initial eligibility electronically through the LWDA's and, if approved by OOWD, will remain eligible and listed on the ETPL for only 1 year for a particular program.

Initial eligibility requires the training provider to provide verifiable information pertaining to:

- Program specific performance information
- Description of each program of training service to be offered;
- Program-specific performance information as outlined in this policy;
- A description concerning whether the provider is in a partnership with a business;
- Other factors that indicate high-quality training services leading to a recognized postsecondary credential; and
- Information addressing the alignment of the training services with in-demand industry sectors and occupations, to the extent practicable.

After the first year if the provider/program meets subsequent approval requirements, continued eligibility will be reviewed every two years. Subsequent eligibility requires the following factors be considered prior to the LWDA's recommendation for approval to the Office of Workforce Development:

- The specific economic, geographic, and demographic factors in the workforce areas in which providers seeking eligibility are located;
- The characteristics of the population served by providers seeking eligibility, including the demonstrated difficulties in serving such populations, where applicable;
- The degree to which training programs relate to in-demand industry sectors and occupation within the state;
- The performance of a provider of program(s) of training services as outlined by the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development;
- The program cost of training services;
- The involvement of employers in the establishment of skill requirements for training program; and



- The impact provider performance will have on State-negotiated WIOA Performance Measures for all program participants.

Apprenticeship programs are exempt and shall be included and maintained on the list for so long as the corresponding program of the provider remains a registered apprenticeship program.

(c) Youth Program Requirements. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

- (1) Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants.<sup>7</sup>

The state developed criteria for local boards to utilize in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities is OETI 11-2003, Change 2 “State Procurement and Contracting Policy.”

The local board will evaluate the ability of the solicited contractors to deliver the full array of youth services within the workforce development area. Ability/ experience normally includes a background in service provision within WIA and/ or WIOA programs including experience in tracking performance measures and a track record in meeting or exceeding mandated performance criteria.

- (2) Describe how the State will use funds to carry out Youth Program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2).<sup>8</sup>

The state will issue its WIOA allotments of youth formula funds to the 9 local area’s to implement their WIOA youth programs (which includes the 14 program elements). This provides the local areas the financial resources to deliver comprehensive youth services as required and outlined in the local plan.

- (3) Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requires additional assistance to complete and educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion specified in WIOA sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

**REQUIRES ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE** -Defined by the state as a low income youth meeting one of the following criteria:

- With a parent or legal guardian that is currently or previously incarcerated for a felony conviction;
- With a parent or legal guardian who lacks a high school diploma or GED;
- Who attends or has attended chronically under performing schools listed as a priority or targeted intervention school on the State Department of Education website <http://www.ok.gov/sde/priority-schools>

<sup>7</sup> Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

<sup>8</sup> Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

- (4) Provide the State's definition of "alternative education".

**ALTERNATIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL** – A public school or publicly contracted educational program that serves youth who have not been successful in mainstream "traditional" academic programs and provides instruction leading to a high school diploma and/or GED.

*Note: To be classified as an "alternative school" or "alternative course of study" for WIOA purposes, a specialized structured curriculum is required which is clearly distinguishable from the regular curriculum offered to students in corresponding grades or classes. Additionally, for WIOA purposes, an alternative school must be approved by the Local Educational Agency (LEA) before students may be reported as attending an alternative school. The term "alternative school" should not be confused with "magnet schools" for specialized study or for accelerated studies or for contracted GED preparation.*

- (5) Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If State law does not define "not attending school" or "attending school," indicate that is the case.

Attending School under WIOA is defined as a youth not younger than 14 years of age, nor older than 21 years of age and attending any school recognized under Oklahoma Law.

- (6) If utilizing the portion of the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.

**BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT** – With respect to an individual, the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level on a generally accepted standardized test or a comparable score on a criterion referenced test.

*Note: Grade level scores below 9.0 (e.g., 8.9) should be considered as "at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level."*

(7)

- (d) Single-area State requirements. In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

- (1) Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)
- (2) The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)
- (3) The type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

Would not apply to Oklahoma

- (e) Waiver Requests (optional). States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

- (1) Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified o State Plan;
- (2) Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;
- (3) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;
- (4) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department’s policy priorities, such as:
  - (A) supporting employer engagement;
  - (B) connecting education and training strategies;
  - (C) supporting work-based learning;
  - (D) improving job and career results, and
  - (E) other guidance issued by the Department.
- (5) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and
- (6) Describes the processes used to:
  - (A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
  - (B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
  - (C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;
  - (D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
  - (E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State’s WIOA Annual Report.
- (7) The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

## **TITLE I-B ASSURANCES**

<b>The State Plan must include assurances that:</b>	
1.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of career and training services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient;
2.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;
3.	The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;
4.	The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);
5.	Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has

	written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;
6.	The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;
7.	The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);
8.	The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;
9.	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;
10.	Priority of Service for covered persons is provided for each of the Title I programs; and
11.	The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.
12.	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);

## **WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM (Employment Services)**

### **(a) Employment Service Professional Staff Development.**

- (1) Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (“OESC”) supports the professional development of staff. As an agency, a dedicated Training, Policy and Staff development team was formed to meet the training demands of the workforce system, managers, and staff. This team provides relevant training to OESC staff and system partners at times. The training consists of national and state demands, system and procedure matters, and other service delivery development opportunities.

With the implementation of WIOA along with other training and development needs, OESC has developed a training schedule for OESC staff in the workforce centers to ensure high quality services are appropriately delivered to workforce customers. We will continue to review and strengthen our product box in order for staff to provide the best service the first time.

- (2) Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility issues.

OESC has been a very active, involved partner in the delivery of services in the workforce centers and in Oklahoma both the Unemployment Insurance Program and Wagner Peyser are administered by the same agency, OESC. OESC staff are well versed in available service among center partners as well as those services provided in their regional communities. Staff review the workforce center customer’s needs and make appropriate referrals to many career services including job referrals, job skills workshops, training, community resources and other partner agencies.

As an agency, we have approached service delivery to our customers with all agency staff. Our Division Directors continue to share and refine many functions that in the past have been “siloe by program.” By sharing multiple program outcomes, Directors have been able to develop and implement an individualized customer service delivery model. Directors continue to share and conduct bi-monthly integrated management meetings with Program Chiefs from all major programs. This information is shared with frontline managers and staff to ensure desired results are achieved. Frontline managers and staff are also encouraged to communicate best practices, policy changes or suggestions for improvement to policy makers through Division Directors. This wrap-around approach fosters an environment for continuous improvement and continues to keep OESC involved in the service delivery as defined by WIOA.

- (b) Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.

The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (“OESC”), has adopted the following priorities and strategic direction to ensure continuous improvements in the delivery of the Unemployment Insurance program and to fulfill our commitment to performance excellence and client centered services. Our mission continues to be to enhance Oklahoma’s economy, by matching jobs and workers to increase the efficiency of local labor markets,

to provide unemployment compensation to support unemployed workers and their communities, to prepare a skilled workforce to enhance and align their skills to meet local labor market needs, and to gather, analyze, and disseminate information about the labor force to improve local economic decisions.

OESC understands that with the fulfillment of our mission comes a great responsibility to the citizens of Oklahoma. The reemployment of Oklahoma's job seekers is the component of OESC's mission that is currently our main focus. In 2012, the OESC embarked on a path of reintegrating and realigning the resources of two of our foundational programs, Employment Services and Unemployment Insurance. The primary goal of the reintegration initiative is to streamline unemployment insurance claims and resolution processes to help customers receive support and get connected to meaningful employment as rapidly as possible.

We realize that part of the success of reemploying claimants early in the process is ensuring they have immediate access to available services. OESC is already a vital partner in the Oklahoma's labor exchange system. For Oklahoma the WIOA program is administered through Oklahoma State University, however the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission has been an integral partner in the Oklahoma Works offices and continues to be. There are 35 Oklahoma Works Centers and all of them are staffed with OESC staff. OESC shares in the infrastructure costs, staffing of the centers, and resource costs. Our staff assists all customers accessing these centers regardless of program. Information on available services is provided to customers when they enter the center. There are qualified workforce services specialists available to serve and/or direct the customer to the appropriate service delivery option. While we don't have designated UI staff in the centers, UI claimants are appropriately directed to available services from the initial claims process through issue resolution. OESC center staff are cross-trained to answer basic questions and assist with issues like address changes, 1099's, etc. OESC staff ensure customers are assisted with filing their unemployment claim and are able to answer questions regarding the initial claims process as well as any questions about rights and responsibilities.

(c) Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.

Over the past couple of years, our reintegration initiative has realigned the resources of two of our foundational programs, Employment Services and Unemployment Insurance. One of main purposes for our decision to reintegrate the Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance programs was to provide prompt, efficient reemployment services for our customers early and often during their unemployment claims process. For OESC, the primary goal of reintegration is the reemployment of our customers to meaningful employment as quickly as possible.

Our decision to reintegrate these major programs has better equipped our agency to respond to the needs of our claimants. The amount of work dedicated to this effort has yielded great success for our customers, employers, stakeholders and staff. In 2013, on average a claimant received unemployment insurance benefits for 16.9 weeks. One of the goals of this effort was to decrease the average duration a claimant received benefits by one week. Several strategies were initiated to meet this goal such as:

- Integrated staff training of both Wagner Peyser and Unemployment Insurance programs including service offerings

- Enhanced messaging to claimants about reemployment services in the Workforce Centers early in the initial claims filing process
- Modified the Worker Profiling processes reemphasizing a reemployment message
- Improved outreach to employers on the benefits of timely new hire reporting
- The implementation of an automated system to verify that claimants have registered for work

As a result of these efforts, OESC assisted in reducing the average week duration by exactly one week in 2014 to 15.89 weeks. In fact, the latest weekly average duration for 2015 ending July 31, 2015, shows a continued reduction at 15.36 weeks. Since this goal was initiated, the average weekly duration a claimant is receiving unemployment insurance benefits has decreased by over one and half weeks. In addition to helping claimants get connected back to work sooner, this has resulted in significant cost savings to the trust fund.

As reintegration of Oklahoma's Employment Services and Unemployment Insurance divisions nears completion, our focus will shift to training staff who have taken over new roles as a result of reintegration and WIOA so that they may develop proficiency in their program areas. Meanwhile, OESC will continue to analyze our processes and look for methods to improve the service delivery for the customers served in WIOA.

(d) Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:

- (1) Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

As described in the previous responses, the OESC complies with this requirement to use Wagner-Peyser funds to support UI claimants. In Oklahoma both the Unemployment Insurance Program and Wagner Peyser are administered by the same agency, OESC. Labor exchange services are provided to all customers accessing the workforce centers by Wagner Peyser staff. In fact, there is a special emphasis placed on serving UI claimants to help connect them back to work as quickly as possible.

We have embarked on several reemployment initiatives that have proven to be effective. Recently, we have implemented the Eligibility Rights Interview (ERI). The ERI is an in-person interview designed to assist identified unemployment insurance (UI) claimants in returning to work. The ERI is conducted by Wagner Peyser staff and will provide reemployment services to the UI Claimant earlier in the UI claims filing process. Claimants selected for ERI are in demand occupations and have filed for UI benefits, been paid for at least five weeks and are still receiving benefits. Some of the services provided include a review of work search efforts, referral to other services and job referrals. Through reemployment efforts such as the ERI, it is the goal of the OESC to continue reducing the amount of weeks a claimant receives benefits because they would be reemployed quicker. The reduction in weeks paid to claimants because they are employed yields significant savings to the UI Trust Fund and reduces employer taxes.

- (2) Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

In Oklahoma, it is required that claimants register for work in the state labor exchange system within seven days of filing their initial claim. For those filing their initial claim online, the system automatically directs them to the labor exchange system to register for work before the completion of the initial claim. For those claimants filing by telephone, they are requested to complete the registration for work within the seven-day requirement. If a claimant does not comply with this requirement, benefits will not be awarded until the requirement has been met.

- (3) Administration of the work test work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

Oklahoma allows two ways for claimants to file an unemployment claim, by telephone and through the Oklahoma Network Initial Claims (ONIC). Through both of these processes, potential eligibility issues are identified based upon the claimants' response to questions during the application for benefits process. Reemployment of claimants continues to be at the forefront for Oklahoma. OESC has modified and enhanced services to claimants to ensure the registration for work requirement is met along with required attendance and completion of other reemployment assistance services. UI claimants receive reemployment information throughout their claims process to include but not limited to; information of available services in Oklahoma Works Centers, resume assistance, job referrals, job search workshops, work search review and access to skills based training. Regardless of the career path the claimant chooses, the end result continues to be reemployment.

- (4) Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

Oklahoma Works is the workforce development system in Oklahoma, which OESC is a part of, where business leaders, educators, and employment professionals work together to achieve job growth, employee productivity and employer satisfaction. Within the system is a network of One-Stop offices where employment, education and training providers are integrating services to assist customers in finding jobs and qualified workers, making career decisions, and accessing training opportunities.

Most people who walk into an Oklahoma Works Center are in search of information. They want to know where the job openings are, what training opportunities are available to them, how to create a resume, etc. These core services are available to everyone through the Oklahoma Works Centers, usually with limited assistance. In fact, there are full-service, comprehensive centers with "Resource Rooms" set aside for self-help, or limited assistance, much like a community library. There are computers and software for customers to prepare a resume, for instance, with books and videos nearby to guide them.

- (e) Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include—

- (1) *Assessment of Need*.

- (A) Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

In Oklahoma, 2% of all farms and ranches hire migrant workers. A total of 858 migrant workers were reported by the 2012 USDA, Census of Agriculture for Oklahoma. It is anticipated that the number of migrant workers will continue to range between 800-1,000 workers in the future for Oklahoma. However, data from O\*NET



Online, gives an average increase of 1-3% per year for all MSFWs, so there may possibly be a slight increase in numbers.

Oklahoma continues to seek identification of and contact with the changing face of its migrant and seasonal farmworker (MSFW) population. The increasing changes in agricultural based technology and mechanization, along with the second worst drought period in Oklahoma history, seem to have contributed to a leveling off of our MSFW population. However, despite these factors, Oklahoma continues to be one of the top agricultural states and recognizes the MSFW population who does work and live here.

Assessing the unique needs of the MSFW population in Oklahoma, like many other states, presents several challenges. The MSFW is difficult to identify, share information with or locate. Despite high agricultural activity within the state, it appears many MSFWs pass through Oklahoma for seasonal work and continue to other states, looking at Oklahoma as merely a “stopover”. While it is believed the MSFW population will remain stable for the coming years, the introduction of more organic and “natural” based agricultural products may lead to an increase in their population.

Typical comments from the field represent the MSFW as someone who is here to work, earn their money and move to the next location. They most generally are sending a significant portion of their pay to their families and must bring in a paycheck. They have no time for training for other employment, unless they can no longer work in the fields due to age, health or other factors. Employers, obviously, want to keep these valued workers and would be reluctant to encourage training or employment outside of meeting the agricultural needs they have. Housing, if provided, is a place to eat, sleep and shower. Minimum requirements established by DOL-ETA and OSHA are met. If housing is not provided by the employer, a migrant worker is left to find his/her own housing.

Other factors such as healthcare, schooling for children, employer requirements, rights, insurance, health & safety information, availability of adequate work clothing and transportation, among others, are needs of the MSFWs. Lack of identification and contact makes it difficult to know how great the needs are. MSFWs are rarely provided transportation to be able to come to town or a career center. Career centers are not available when they are not working. The needed information must be brought to the MSFW in the fields, communities, or frequented businesses/services they utilize.

- (B) Provide an assessment of available resources for outreach and whether the State believes such resources are sufficient. If the State believes the resources are insufficient, provide a description of what would help and what the State would do with the additional resources.

Oklahoma strives to continue improvement interacting with and providing assistance to our MSFW community. Oklahoma is not designated as a significant MSFW state due to the low percentage of MSFWs identified. There are no full-time agricultural outreach workers retained by OESC and almost all contact with MSFWs comes through our Oklahoma Works Centers when MSFWs register for unemployment or other center services. Outreach which would provide more sources for dissemination of information about OESC and other partners’ services, training opportunities, and MSFW rights, health and safety information. Available resources for potential outreach activities include, but are not limited to ORO, OSHA, DOL Wage & Hour, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, the Oklahoma Department of Education, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Workforce development Boards, Oklahoma Works, and various health, medical and charitable organizations which serve the MSFWs.

Ultimately, a good strategy to identify times dates and locations to provide outreach activities is the first item needed. Secondly, identification of core outreach staff at the centers and the addition of dedicated outreach

workers in key centers would be the next step. The last piece is to ensure fluid communication of data, information and provision of manpower in a unified manner and through a central figure, the State Monitor Advocate (SMA). This would allow various reporting requirements to be met in a more efficient manner, information needed by partners (especially the WIOA Title 1 section 167 grantee) would be routinely provided and critical alliances (healthcare, training, transportation, housing, etc...) could be established to better meet the MSFWs' needs.

(2) *Outreach Activities.*

- (A) Describe the State agency's proposed outreach activities including strategies on how to contact farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

Several proposed outreach activities continue to be in the planning stage or in their infancy at this time. A brief summary of each follows:

- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) group - The policy of OESC is to provide quality and timely language assistance services to customers with LEP to ensure meaningful access to programs, services and activities. The LEP program is identifying significant documents, informational materials and other items used on a daily basis in our workforce centers to translate to Spanish. Our OKJobMatch database systems allows for a variety of language options.
- Placement of bi-lingual Oklahoma Works Centers – 12 compensated bi-lingual positions in 8 local offices, with 4 others at various state office positions. Bi-lingual staff are being placed in high volume offices or units (i.e. call center for unemployment) to assist Spanish-speaking consumers.
- Identification of pertinent groups, organizations and associations involved with the agricultural community. OESC continues to maintain relationships with agencies who may assist or who work specifically with the MSFW; included but not limited to the Oklahoma Works, Oklahoma Department of Education, and US and Oklahoma Departments of Labor, ORO Development Corporation (Section 167 Farmworker Program grant recipient), and the local WIOA Workforce Development Boards. OESC will continue to work in establishing new alliances with those entities which will be of assistance to us and the provision of services to MSFWs. Additional connections are being sought with OSHA, US Department of Justice, EPA, CDC, and Health & Human Services, as they relate to MSFWs and other agricultural workers.
- Establish networking and some structured communication with these groups, organizations and associations to help to identify ongoing needs and services. The possibility of establishing an agricultural based work group is being explored. Meetings to realize a joint effort with others to locate and assist MSFWs will be attended within the limits of available resources. (This summer SMA sat in on DOL Wage & Hour training for watermelon farm employers in Southwestern Oklahoma. This experience was very beneficial in demonstrating the need for agencies/providers sharing a common forum.) OESC plans to be a unifying force for this activity and networking in the future. Identify and provide increased literature and media outreach to the agricultural community.
- Develop MSFW informational packet for workers and for employers summarizing available resources. Early stage planning for an MSFW Handbook and an Agricultural Employment Handbook has begun. A goal of summer, 2016 is planned for the MSFW handbook.
- Establish a more visible MSFW State Monitor Advocate internet presence. An Oklahoma State Monitor Advocate webpage was placed on the OESC agency website in January, 2015. In addition to the basic role, items such as agricultural related materials for the worker and employer, links and location of centers and agency/community resources, complaint process, safety and other informational items are now displayed.

- Provide more extensive training to OESC and partner staffs in Oklahoma Works Centers to better identify MSFWs, their needs and service requirements, and provide informational material to those MSFWs, employers and organizations in their counties served. A desk aid for staff to assist in the proper identification of MSFWs has been discussed, created and distributed. This is a first step in acclimating center staff & partners to more aggressive identification of and assistance to MSFWs.
- Market Oklahoma Works Centers as viable assistance centers for the MSFWs. Both flyers and web-based information will be used for this purpose. The OESC webpage currently displays all offices, with information on each. Links to this site will be available in more locations. Handouts will be developed for outreach activities, job fairs or other events.
- Partnership with the ORO Development Corporation, a current grantee provider of the WIOA Title I Section 167 program and non-profit corporation of the State of Oklahoma, will continue to be developed and utilized by our Oklahoma Works Centers. ORO provides employment, training and supportive services to Oklahoma's MSFWs, often through referral from our LOs. ORO is located in 5 Oklahoma Works Centers and works alongside OESC staff and other partners to provide increased services in the parts of the state with higher concentration of MSFW population
- Target community based business and events in MSFW communities (i.e. shopping center, stores, restaurants, etc....) to reach MSFWs with informational materials.

(B) The plan for the proposed outreach activities must include:

- (i) The goals for the number of farmworkers who will be contacted each program year by W-P staff.

Anticipated outreach activities by W-P staff & Section 167 partner Farmworker Program grant recipient (ORO) should bring increased numbers of MSFWs to centers or encourage MSFWs to utilize W-P based registration systems for job search, training and other programs/services. With the incorporation of ORO into more center based activities, including OKJobMatch/OSL, numbers of farmworkers contacted by W-P staff should easily reach 100 through normal center intake and services contacts.

- (ii) The number of farmworkers who will be contacted each program year by other agencies under cooperative arrangements. These numerical goals must be based on the number of farmworkers estimated to be in the State in the coming year, taking into account the varying concentration of farmworkers during the seasons in each geographic area, the range of services needed in each area and the number of W-P and/or cooperating agency staff who will conduct outreach.

In PY 2013 188 participants and in PY 2014 ORO addressed the needs of 176 participants.

- (iii) The State's plans to conduct outreach to as many farm workers as possible.

Oklahoma is dependent upon other agencies, entities and center partners to engage in outreach activities to reach as many MSFWs as possible. The following are some anticipated activities to address further outreach:

- Onsite review and training at the 5 Oklahoma Works Centers which have higher volume MSFW activity. These are: OKC Brookwood South, Clinton, Altus, Muskogee and Miami. The tentative schedule is to see each once per year as fiscally allowed.

- Monthly contact via email, phone or in-person with ORO to establish a more powerful relationship with this key partner and resource. This continues and SMA is now a board member.
- Quarterly meetings of an informal group of MSFW/Agricultural interests. The intent is to explore the interest and need to establish a more formal representative group in Oklahoma. At a minimum, this group would continue with informal meetings on a quarterly basis to maintain rapport, sharing of information and materials. Core membership is anticipated to be DOL Wage & Hour, OSHA, ORO, WIOA, OESC representatives for Centers and EEO in the beginning.
- Attendance at OESC Area & Oklahoma Works manager meetings. The purpose would be to be available for questions and provide pertinent information to these groups for working with the MSFWs in their center and regions. Additionally, establish a better path of communication and contact with WIOA state leadership and local boards.
- On-going training as needed of staff, centers and partners to ensure proper handling of all MSFW activities including but not limited to the “Welcoming Unit”; Limited English Proficiency issues; the complaint process; outreach activities and basic knowledge of what is required by law or regulation concerning MSFWs.
- Information to agricultural employers regarding the services available at centers will be made via email, mailing or telephone during Wage and Prevailing Practices surveys at least annually.

(iv) The number of outreach workers dedicated to outreach to farmworkers by service areas.

As Oklahoma is not a significant MSFW state as defined by the Department of Labor and does not have any dedicated outreach workers. OESC does not plan to assign full-time agricultural outreach positions to any of its Workforce Centers, due to limited numbers of MSFWs.

(3) *The State's strategy for:*

- (A) Coordinating outreach efforts with WIOA Title 1 section 167 grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

OESC will coordinate with the WIOA Section 167 NFJP grantee, Oro Development Corporation (ORO), to identify MSFW needs, and to facilitate or provide intensive services and training services. This will be facilitated by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Cooperative agreements are not anticipated with other public or private community service groups. Nevertheless, OESC does plan to engage other groups, associations and organizations for the purpose of identifying and assisting MSFWs.

OESC continues to maintain relationships with agencies who may assist or who work specifically with the MSFW; included but not limited to the Oklahoma Works, Oklahoma Department of Education, and US and Oklahoma Departments of Labor, ORO Development Corporation (Section 167 Farmworker Program grant recipient), and the local WIOA Workforce Development Boards.

OESC will continue to work in establishing new alliances with those entities which will be of assistance to us and the provision of services to MSFWs. Additional connections are being sought with OSHA, US Department of Justice, EPA, CDC, and Health & Human Services, as they relate to MSFWs and other agricultural workers. OESC will work to establish networking and some structured communication with these groups, organizations and associations to help to identify ongoing needs and services.

Contact with other relevant agencies is planned, including the Red Cross and Catholic Charities for assistance with stranded travelers. Visits with Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Legal Aid of Oklahoma, the Mexican Consulate and various health related organizations are also planned. There are other plans to become a more active participant in WIOA Board, Area Manager and statewide Oklahoma Works Center meetings. The possibility of establishing an agricultural based work group is being explored. Meetings to realize a joint effort with others to locate and assist MSFWs will be attended within the limits of available resources. Communicate with others the need for agencies/providers sharing a common forum. OESC plans to be a unifying force for this activity and networking in the future.

(B) Explaining to farmworkers the services available at the local one-stop centers.

Oklahoma plans for explaining services to farmworkers include:

- Develop MSFW informational packet for workers and for employers summarizing available resources. Early stage planning for an MSFW Handbook and an Agricultural Employment Handbook has begun. A goal of summer, 2016 is planned for the MSFW handbook.
- Establish a more visible MSFW State Monitor Advocate internet presence. An Oklahoma State Monitor Advocate webpage was placed on the OESC agency website in January, 2015. In addition to the basic role, items such as agricultural related materials for the worker and employer, links and location of centers and agency/community resources, complaint process, safety and other informational items are now displayed.
- Provide more extensive training to OESC and partner staffs in Oklahoma Works Centers to better identify MSFWs, their needs and service requirements, and provide informational material to those MSFWs, employers and organizations in their counties served. A desk aid for staff to assist in the proper identification of MSFWs has been discussed, created and distributed. This is a first step in acclimating center staff & partners to more aggressive identification of and assistance to MSFWs.
- Market Oklahoma Works Centers as viable assistance centers for the MSFWs. Both flyers and web-based information will be used for this purpose. The OESC webpage currently displays all offices, with information on each. Links to this site will be available in more locations. Handouts will be developed for outreach activities, job fairs or other events.

(C) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

The Oklahoma employment service complaint system to farmworkers is currently under review with a revision for implementation in a unified center anticipated for completion by February 2016. It is also anticipated that giving further training to Oklahoma Works Center staff in properly identifying MSFWs will result in more MSFW complaints being identified. Additionally, ongoing meetings with ORO staff should also lead to increased use of the complaint system by them, in the future. Outreach materials to be developed will include complaint system information for workers, employers and organizations who work with MSFWs.

(D) Providing farm workers with a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

MSFW rights and complaint information being provided to farm works with respect to terms and conditions of work (prior to H-2A and H-2B referrals) and are in place in all centers. Oklahoma plans to integrate a review of these items with OESC audit team office visits to ensure availability and compliance.

- (E) Urging those farm workers who have been reached through the State's outreach efforts to go to the local one-stop center to obtain the full range of employment and training services.

As commented on previously, it is very difficult to encourage MSFWs to come to centers which are only open when they are working in the fields. At this time, it is equally difficult to expect them to jeopardize current employment/income for a potential change of employment, as many are at the mercy of their employers for not only their current job, but also for transportation and the promise of work next season. Informational flyers and access to computers for online application provided in outreach activities at workforce centers, at cultural/community events and through media outlets (radio) represent the best methods at this time.

- (4) *Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system.*  
Describe the activities planned for providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system.
- Oklahoma prides itself on taking care of its citizens by whatever means are necessary within available resources. The MSFW, who seeks services through our workforce centers, is provided the same level of services as any other customer who walks through our doors.
  - The LEP program is identifying significant documents, informational materials and other items used on a daily basis in our workforce centers to translate to Spanish.
  - Our Oklahoma Joblink/OKJobMatch (OKJobMatch) database systems allow for a variety of language options.
  - Bi-lingual staffs are being placed in high volume offices serving those of Hispanic descent.
  - Partnership with the ORO Development Corporation (ORO), a current grantee provider of the WIOA Title I Section 167 program and non-profit corporation of the State of Oklahoma, will continue to be developed and utilized by our workforce centers. ORO provides employment, training and supportive services to Oklahoma's MSFWs, often through referral from our workforce centers. ORO is located in 5 Oklahoma Works centers and work alongside OESC staff and other partners to provide increased services in the parts of the state with higher concentration of MSFW population.
  - OESC continues to maintain relationships with agencies who may assist or who work specifically with the MSFW; included but not limited to the Oklahoma Works, Oklahoma Department of Education, and US and Oklahoma Departments of Labor. OESC will continue to work in establishing new alliances with those entities which will be of assistance to us and the provision of services to MSFWs.

- Meetings to realize a joint effort with others to locate and assist MSFWs will be attended. OESC plans to be a unifying force for this activity and networking in the future.
- Cooperation between OESC's Director of Reemployment Services Customer Service Division, WIOA Director and State Monitor Advocate will ensure MSFW needs and services are addressed throughout the State's Workforce and WDA systems.
- Increased interaction with Workforce Development Boards is anticipated to communicate needs and ensure their commitment to working with the MSFW.

(5) *Other Requirements.*

- (A) State Monitor Advocate. The plan must contain a statement that indicates that the State Monitor Advocate has been afforded the opportunity to review and approve the AOP.

The State AOP was reviewed and approved by Pam Hoskins, Oklahoma State Monitor Advocate.

- (B) Review and Public Comment. The plan must provide information indicating that WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program ( NFJP) grantees, other appropriate farmworker groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations, have been given an opportunity to comment on the State AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

The State AOP was reviewed by and comments and suggestions solicited from ORO, OESC Customer Support Division and OSU/OKC.

- (C) Assessment of progress. The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

The Oklahoma State Monitor Advocate (SMA) is a part-time position and there is no other staff. Oklahoma is considered a non-significant MSFW state and due to this status there have been no goals or performance levels to meet. Steps forward from the last plan have been made and activities are carried over to this plan as most continue to be needed activities. Improvement is anticipated in all planned activities, as funds will allow.

## WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

<b>The State Plan must include assurances that:</b>	
1.	The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3));
2.	The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers;
3.	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and
4.	State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.



## ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

- (a) Aligning of Content Standards. Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1))

### RESPONSE

Oklahoma's approved assessments are standardized, valid, reliable, and approved for use by the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTAE). **Standardized** is defined as having directions, time limits, materials, and scoring procedures that are designed to remain constant each time the test is given. **Valid** is defined as the degree to which the assessment actually measures what it is intended to measure. **Reliable** is defined as the consistency with which an assessment produces results. **Pre-assessment** is defined as the initial assessment administered to a student when they first enroll in the program for the current fiscal year. **Post-assessment** is defined as an assessment administered to a student to measure learning gains since the pre-assessment or their last assessment in the current fiscal year.

Educational functioning level of a student is determined by the National Reporting System (NRS) approved standardized assessment scale scores (<http://www.nrsweb.org/>). All students are placed into an appropriate Educational Functioning Level (EFL) as determined by the student's scale score of the standardized assessments chosen by the state. State performance targets for the NRS educational functioning levels are negotiated between the state and OCTAE each fiscal year. Local programs are responsible for meeting these state EFL targets. The state's aggregated pre- and post-assessment data collected from local programs determines whether or not the state meets its performance targets for a fiscal year.

Oklahoma's Approved Assessments
Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE):
<i>Adult Basic Education (ABE) Reading, Language, and Mathematics Skills</i>
TABE Complete Language Assessment System - English (CLAS-E):
<i>English Language Learners (ELL) Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking Skills</i>
Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy 2008:
<i>ELL Reading and Writing Skills</i>
BEST Plus:
<i>ELL Speaking and Listening Skills</i>

In addition to using required standardized assessments for NRS reporting and accountability, programs use assessments for instructional purposes. Accountability and reporting purposes of assessment include but are not limited to:

1. Uniform measurement of learner gains that are aligned with the NRS educational functioning levels.
2. Consistent comparison of the success of programs in meeting state performance targets.
3. Consistent comparison of program data for performance-based funding.

**Instructional purposes of assessment include but are not limited to:**

1. Determining the instructional needs of individual learners.
2. Determining the effectiveness of instruction through learner gains.
3. Providing information regarding local program and/or statewide professional development needs.

Adult Basic Education EFL		
Beginning ABE Literacy	Beginning Basic Education	Low Intermediate Basic Education
TABE Grade Level: 0 - 1.9	TABE Grade Level: 2 - 3.9	TABE Grade Level: 4 - 5.9
Reading: 368 - 460	Reading: 367 and below	Reading: 461 - 571
Math: 313 and below	Math: 314 - 441	Math: 442 - 505
Language: 389 and below	Language: 390 - 490	Language: 491 - 523
High Intermediate Basic Education	Low Adult Secondary Education	High Adult Secondary Education
TABE Grade Level: 6 - 8.9	TABE Grade Level: 9 - 10.9	TABE Grade Level: 11 - 12
Reading: 518 - 566	Reading: 567 - 595	Reading: 596 and above
Math: 506 - 565	Math: 566 - 594	Math: 595 and above
Language: 524 - 559	Language: 560 - 585	Language: 586 and above

English as a Second Language		
Beginning ESL Literacy	Low Beginning ESL	High Beginning ESL
BEST Plus: 400 and below (SPL 0 - 1)	BEST Plus: 401 - 417 (SPL 2)	BEST Plus: 418 - 438 (SPL 3)
BEST Literacy: 0 - 20 (SPL 0 - 1)	BEST Literacy: 21 - 52 (SPL 2)	BEST Literacy: 53 - 63 (SPL 3)
Reading and Writing: 225 - 394	Reading and Writing: 395 - 441	Reading and Writing: 442 - 482
Listening and Speaking: 230 - 407	Listening and Speaking: 408 - 449	Listening and Speaking: 450 - 485
Low Intermediate ESL	High Intermediate ESL	Advanced ESL
BEST Plus: 439 - 472 (SPL 4)	BEST Plus: 473 - 506 (SPL 5)	BEST Plus: 507 - 540 (SPL 6)
BEST Literacy: 64 - 67 (SPL 4)	BEST Literacy: 68 - 75 (SPL 5)	BEST Literacy: 76 - 78 (SPL 6)
Reading and Writing: 483 - 514	Reading and Writing: 515 - 556	Reading and Writing: 557 - 600
Listening and Speaking: 486 - 506	Listening and Speaking: 526 - 558	Listening and Speaking: 559 - 600

(b) Local Activities. Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section

231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

### **Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)**

Adult education;

Literacy;

Workplace adult education and literacy activities;

Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities;

Integrated English literacy and civics education;

Workforce preparation activities; or

Integrated education and training that—

1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

**Special Rule.** Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

### **RESPONSE**

Activities provided under AEFLA are coordinated with and not duplicative of programs, services, or activities made available to adults under various other programs.

- Local Programs will develop and/or strengthen coordination with elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary education institutions, Workforce Oklahoma Centers, job training programs, and social service agencies.
- Local Programs shall collaborate with other agencies and community resources to obtain student referrals and assist students with counseling, employment, postsecondary education/training, learning or physical disabilities, and other support services.
- Local programs will recruit populations most in need of literacy services, as identified by needs assessments and demographic data.
- Programs will have in place a comprehensive learner orientation process that includes learner expectations and program requirements. The program has identified community resources to assist adults with counseling, employment, postsecondary education/training, and learning or physical disabilities.
  - 1) The program implements recruiting strategies designed to reach qualifying adult learners with minimal literacy skills and those most in

need of literacy services, as evidenced by documented learner participation.

- 2) The program collaborates with agencies and community organizations that provide documented learner referrals.
- 3) The program implements a learner orientation process that includes learner expectations; program requirements; appropriate assessment; and goal-setting.
- 4) Program staff members are aware of and have available to them a written listing of community resources for participant referral and keep documentation of any referrals made through the local adult education program.

(c) Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals. Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

Adult education and literacy activities;  
Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;  
Secondary school credit;  
Integrated education and training;  
Career pathways;  
Concurrent enrollment;  
Peer tutoring; and  
Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

## **RESPONSE**

Adult education and literacy classes will be provided in correctional facilities. Instructional strategies for this population will include: academic programs which teach basic skills in reading, writing, and math; adult secondary programs leading to a GED or its equivalent; 'workplace education programs which teach job-specific basic skills related to the offenders' job assignments in the correctional facilities; instruction in job readiness, life skills, and self-esteem; and English literacy, where needed. Since it is recognized that a large number of offenders may have a learning disability, students may be screened for learning disabilities using the Payne Learning Needs Inventory or other screening instruments, if it is deemed appropriate by the instructor. Other institutionalized adults may include those in mental institutions, juvenile detention centers, and drug abuse and treatment centers. Strategies for these adults will include teaching basic skills and literacy in the contexts of real-life situations, such as life skills, self-esteem, employment, and citizenship.

(d) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program. Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA,

for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Describe how the program is designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

### **RESPONSE**

English Literacy: The purposes of English literacy instruction are to: (1) assist adults whose native language is other than English and who have limited English proficiency to increase their ability to speak, read, write, and understand the English language; (2) to assist adults with limited English proficiency in obtaining the literacy and basic skills necessary to compete in the workplace, become self-sufficient, and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The key elements of English literacy instructional programs include the following:

- a. Classroom Environment: Classroom environments that are nonthreatening will be provided in order to facilitate the second language acquisition process and to enhance self-esteem and teamwork;
- b. Instructional Strategies: English language skills will be taught in the real-life contexts of the workplace, the family, and the community to ensure that limited English speaking adults acquire the English language survival skills needed in a variety of work, academic, and social settings;
- c. Assessment: Students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills will be assessed using the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) or other formal ESL assessment instruments. The pre- and post-assessments will establish baseline and progress data in order to meet the core indicators of performance as identified in Section 5.0 of the State Plan.
- d. Goal Setting: English literacy students will be assisted in setting realistic goals based on the initial assessment of their skills and on their personal goals;
- e. Citizenship Instruction: Students will be provided with English language and citizenship instruction necessary to successfully complete the citizenship application and interview process where appropriate.

- (e) **State Leadership.** Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

### **RESPONSE**

ODCTE administers and monitors federal and state adult education and literacy funds to local providers and provides program development and training activities in order to assure quality basic skills services for all students across the State.

ODCTE will release a yearly grant extension application for Federal Workforce Investment Act Title II for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Services to current providers. Each eligible organization desiring an extension shall submit an extension application containing information and assurances such as ODCTE may require, including a:

1. Description of how funds awarded under AEFLA will be spent.
2. Description of cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with local one-stop shops and other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities.
3. Transition plan detailing the implementation of the required WIOA act.

12.5 percent of the Federal money is allowed for Leadership activities; 5 percent of the Federal money is allowed for administrative activities; 82.5 percent of the Federal money must be distributed to grantees.

1. Allocation for correctional programs are subtracted from the 82.5 percent prior to allocating monies to local grantees. The total amount allocated to correctional programs will not exceed 10 percent of the 82.5 percent.
2. The remaining balance (after corrections) of the 82.5% is the amount to be allocated to local grantees. Using this amount as the base, the following steps will be used to calculate:
  - a. Seventy percent of the base money will be allocated based on the total number of fundable students each program served two years prior to the allocation year. Fundable students are defined as meeting the following criteria:
    - i. Educational funding level to be tracked for educational gain during 12 or more attendance hours;
    - ii. A pre-assessment score for the fiscal year that places them in a National Reporting System (NRS) the fiscal year;
    - iii. A per fundable student dollar amount will be calculated by dividing the total number of fundable students in the state (two years prior to allocation year) into the 70 percent dollar amount.
  - b. Thirty percent of the base money is allocated based on program performance points earned by each program two years prior to the allocation year. Performance point include the following:
    - i. Meeting or exceeding the state's target goal percentage in each NRS education's functioning level – total of 11 points;
    - ii. Meeting or exceeding the state's target goal percentage in each NRS Core performance areas (obtaining a high school equivalency diploma, entering postsecondary education/training, entering employment, retaining employment) – total of 4 points;
    - iii. Meeting or exceeding the state's target percentage of 60 percent for students receiving a pre- and post-assessment score within the fiscal year – total of 1 point.

- (f) Assessing Quality. Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

## **RESPONSE**

ODCTE will evaluate annually the effectiveness of adult education and literacy programs. The annual evaluation is designed to measure the ability of local programs to meet or exceed the established performance levels based on the federal and state Core Indicators of Performance as well as their ability to reach high standards related to Oklahoma's Indicators of Program Quality and the criteria for funding. Annual evaluation activities will include the following:

1. Performance results achieved on each of the federal and state Core Indicators of Performance will be compiled and compared to the ODCTE's performance levels negotiated with the United States Department of Education. Progress towards meeting the levels of performance will be tracked through the LiteracyPro

Management Information System (MIS) which has been adopted for use statewide by Oklahoma's adult education and literacy programs. LiteracyPro allows local programs to collect, compile, and report student identification and demographic information, contact hours, placement level at program entry, learning goals, pre and post testing information, student progress and follow-up, and other needed information.

ODCTE will build on the National Reporting System (NRS) pilot to identify strategies that local providers can use to obtain follow-up information in students who leave the program and obtain employment, retain employment or job advancement, enter post-secondary education or job training programs, and/or obtain a high school equivalency. These strategies may include sampling techniques which conform to ODCTE's specifications as identified in the annual performance report and approved by the Office of Management and Budget.

2. On-site evaluations of at least four local programs will be conducted annually. The on-site evaluations will be conducted by a review team consisting of state adult education and literacy staff members, local adult education professionals and/or Title I partners, if appropriate.

The on-site evaluations will consist of an entry interview with the local program directors and one or more adult education teachers, a review of documentation which supports the Core Indicators of Performance, the Indicators of Program Quality, and the criteria for funding, visits to adult education classes, student interviews, and an exit interview. Based on the findings of the on-site evaluation, a final evaluation report detailing program strengths and recommendations for improvement will be completed for each program reviewed.

3. ODCTE will perform desk-top monitoring of all local adult education and Literacy programs throughout the entire fiscal year. Based on any potential non-compliant findings of the desk-top monitoring, on-site evaluations will be conducted.

## ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

<b>States must provide written and signed certifications that:</b>	
1.	The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;
2.	The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;
3.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;
4.	All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;
5.	A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;
6.	The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;
7.	The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and
8.	The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;
<b>The State Plan must include assurances that:</b>	
1.	The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions);
2.	The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;
3.	The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA; and
4.	Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

1. [SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. [Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)



3. [SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities \(required, only if applicable\)](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified State Plan <sup>9</sup> must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

- (a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council. All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:
- (1) input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;
  - (2) the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and
  - (3) the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

The Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council complies with the Federal Rehabilitation Act mandates through its strategic plan process and the following functions and related tasks.

The Mission of the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council (ORC) is "To facilitate consumer education and empowerment, to assure services are of high quality, and lead to employment of individuals with disabilities within the state of Oklahoma."

Program and Planning Committee: Review, analyze and advise DSU on the standards and indicators as laid out by Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Active participation on the DSU State Plan Meetings. Active participation on the DSU Comprehensive Needs Assessment development initiative. Analyze the trends of the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Goal 1: In accordance with Section 105 (A)(c)(i), the Program and Planning Committee, will quarterly or as necessary, review, analyze and advise DSU on the standards and indicators, customer satisfaction statewide comprehensive needs assessment, and other relevant data.

Program and Planning Committee Objectives:

Objective 1-1: The Council must, after consulting with the State Workforce Development Board-- Review, analyze, and advise the Designated State unit regarding the performance of the State unit's responsibilities under this part, particularly responsibilities related to-- Eligibility, including order of selection.

Objective 1-2: The extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and functions performed by State agencies that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under this part.

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<sup>9</sup> Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA

Objective 1-3: In partnership with the designated State unit— develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities in accordance with Sec. 361.29(c).

Objective 1-4: Evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Secretary in accordance with Sec. 361.29(e).

Objective 1-5: Advise the designated State agency and the designated State unit regarding activities carried out under this part and assist in the preparation of the State plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by this part.

Objective 1-6: To the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with —The functions performed by the designated State agency; The vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the Act; and the employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this part, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with those employment outcomes.

Goal 2: The Program and Planning Committee will support quality customer services, career planning and effective employment.

Program and Planning Committee Activities:

Activity 1 - Request the DSU to report the findings of the customer satisfaction survey for open and closed cases, annually or every two years as conducted.

Activity 2 - Field Coordinators will continue to report on the performance activities using the standards and indicators data template at the quarterly ORC meetings.

Activity 3 - Report and Recommend current data to the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council Program Manager for inclusion on the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council website.

Activity 4 - Continue to support all disability groups and report any new information regarding them to the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council.

Activity 5 - Collaborate with the DSU through the state plan process to include the development of the goals and priorities.

Activity 6 - Serve as a repository from consumer disability information groups to make recommendations to the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council for potential collaborations, partnerships and/or initiatives.

Goal 3: Maintain standing committees that address the goals and objectives outlined by the ORC, the DSU State Plan, and the Rehabilitation Act (i.e., Policy and Legislative Committee, Program and Planning Committee, and Transition and Employment Committee). Every ORC member will serve on a committee(s).

Executive Committee – Comprised of the SRC Chair, Vice-Chair, and 2 members-at-large. The Executive Committee also consists of the Associate Director and Director of Sponsored Programs of the OSU, Department of Wellness, who oversees the contractual administration of the ORC. Ensures that committees are assigned to

meet the requirements of Section 105 of the Rehab Act with regard to Public Hearings, State Plan, Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Customer Satisfaction and Annual Report.

#### Executive Committee Objectives:

Objective 1-1: Prepare and submit to the Governor and to the Secretary no later than 90 days after the end of the Federal fiscal year an annual report on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State and make the report available to the public through appropriate modes of communication.

Objective 1-2: Perform other comparable functions, consistent with the purpose of this part, as the Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.

Met or Unmet/Reason

Objective 1-3: Resources - The Council, in conjunction with the Designated State unit, must prepare a plan for the provision of resources, including staff and other personnel that may be necessary and sufficient for the Council to carry out its functions under this part. The resource plan must, to the maximum extent possible, rely on the use of resources in existence during the period of implementation of the plan. Any disagreements between the designated State unit and the Council regarding the amount of resources necessary to carry out the functions of the Council must be resolved by the Governor, consistent with paragraphs (i)(1) and (2) of this section. The Council must, consistent with State law, supervise and evaluate the staff and personnel that are necessary to carry out its functions. Those staff and personnel that are assisting the Council in carrying out its functions may not be assigned duties by the designated State unit or any other agency or office of the State that would create a conflict of interest.

#### Executive Committee Activities:

Activity 1: Meet with DSU Division Administrators and the State Director, quarterly, or as needed, to maintain regular communication and collaborate on the development of the agenda.

Activity 2: As a Council vacancy opens, the Program Manager will recruit, recommend, and consult with the Governor's Deputy of Appointments to ensure membership compliance with the Rehabilitation Act.

Activity 3: Actively recruit and outreach with businesses and disability organizations to educate them on the services of DSU as well as the SRC purpose.

Activity 4: Continue to coordinate with the DSU Division Administrators to ensure attendance of Field Coordinators and associate members to attend quarterly meetings.

Activity 5: The Program Manager will participate on the DSU's Oklahoma Works Team.

Activity 6: The ORC will send at least one representative to the SILC quarterly meetings and a SILC representative will attend and report to the ORC on SILC activities.

Activity 7: Explore opportunities for orientation of SILC members on the role of the ORC.

Activity 8: Continually review and update the ORC Website.

Policy and Legislative Committee: Activities include, but are not limited to, advocacy and education, policy and State Plan review, State Plan Public Hearings and Success Stories. Also, responsible for the reviewing/monitoring of pending and current disability-related legislation, particularly with respect to impact on funding; suggest/develop legislation as needed. Active participation on the DSU Policy Re-engineering Committee. Support DSU with both national and state efforts to enhance advocacy activities and services for VR/VS clientele.

Goal 4: The ORC will build capacity for consumer education and empowerment to showcase awareness and education for both consumers and employers.

#### Policy and Legislative Committee Objectives:

Objective 1-1: To avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with the activities of other councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council established under 34 CFR part 364, the advisory panel established under section 612(a)(21) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council described in section 124 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the State mental health planning council established under section 1914(a) of the Public Health Service Act, the assistive technology grant and the State workforce investment board.

Objective 1-2: Provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between the designated State agency and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State.

Objective 1-3: Support DSU with disability-related legislation during the Oklahoma Legislative Session.

- Insignia legislation to support new ADA icon project
- Cell phone surcharge to generate more revenue to support AT purchases for those who are deaf, hard of hearing and/or speech-impaired
- Establish Oklahoma ABLE savings accounts for individuals with disabilities 26 years of age and above

Objective 1-4: Support DSU efforts with Access for All Initiative for all job seekers and businesses and employers work sites through all levels of Oklahoma Works. Working with the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED), system partners bring sharper focus on developing and employing more Oklahomans with disabilities.

#### Policy and Legislative Committee Activities:

Activity 1 - Promote and increase the number of Job Seeker Success Stories (JSS) to be distributed annually to key stakeholders at the DSU Disability Awareness Day, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Capitol Hill visits, the Governor, and the Lieutenant Governor. Post new stories quarterly on the ORC website and share with members at the ORC quarterly meetings.

Note: The target would be 50 a year/10 per region (Central, Northwest, Southwest, Northeast and Southeast). Also, in addition to the job seeker success stories, create an 'employer' component when possible, making the success story stronger by showcasing successful employment of DSU job seekers with disabilities. Emphasis will be placed on gathering DVR and DVS transition stories. A short video showcasing the more impactful stories will also be created.

Activity 2 - Continue participation and input with DVR/DVS staff to ensure the DSU policies are in alignment with the Rehabilitation Act, Oklahoma consumer needs and employment outcomes.

Activity 3 - Partner with DSU on “Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol”, by marketing the event, setting up an exhibitor booth, and assisting consumers by being legislative guides.

Activity 4 - Continue to partner with other consumer advocacy groups to host the “Meet the Candidates Forum”, as events occur during State election years.

Activity 5 - The ORC will partner with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and National Council of State Administrators of the Blind (NCSAB) on federal legislative initiatives by attending the spring and/or fall meetings and by participating in national sub-committee activities and providing updates to full council. Council members to go as well. The ORC Program Manager will provide the Council with any DSU policy updates during each ORC Council Quarterly meeting.

Activity 6 - Provide public comment on policy changes, promote consumer attendance at all public hearings and distribute flyers with summary of proposed changes and information on public hearings.

Transition and Employment Committee: Active participation on the Oklahoma Transition Council. Support DSU with statewide efforts to enhance transition activities and services for youth in secondary settings to increase successful employment outcomes. The primary focus of this committee will be to support activities which provide enhanced services to youth and students with disabilities to help them prepare for life after high school, including, but not limited to, further education/training, competitive integrated employment, independent living and social skills, self-determination, and self-advocacy.

Goal 5: Collaborate with the DSU to address the utilization of in-demand occupation information during the career planning process as well as the enhancement of a job seeker page on the DSU website in accessible formats for all DSU consumers.

Transition and Employment Committee Objectives:

Objective 1.1: Partner to add links to the DSU website with live links to host demand occupation information gathered from the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Labor Statistics and other sources. We may have to have examples on how to understand the website information. Gather information regarding programs that are currently missing from the website.

Note: Develop a mock site that OU Masters students with transition degrees can have as a directed project. The website will be accessible. Add skills tabs for teachers, adults and transition. Add a quiz to the website where they will answer questions to determine their needs. Add a tab for In Demand Occupations, Career Techs, Accommodations, etc.

1. Identify existing job preparation tools (e.g., [www.okcareerguide.com](http://www.okcareerguide.com)) to be included as resources on this dedicated page.
2. Create and develop the content of the page to be provided in layout format for DSU Communications Office.
3. Develop partnership buy-in from ORC member organizations to link with this resource from their websites
4. Market the Page

5. Integrate 2.4 in the Job Seeker page. OK Career Guide replacing OKCIS. Add transition care notebook, increase job shadowing, in demand occupations, host events about these things, list programs available, like Project Search and Ijobs. Imbed this information with the new web page.

Objective 1.2: Review DSU successful closure data for adults and transition age youth to determine if there is a correlation between agency closures and demand occupations.

Objective 1.3: Identify underutilized in demand occupation areas that could be potential job match for consumers. Develop ways to encourage and support to facilitate training with staff. Where is the gap? Where is our focus? Nationwide, Regional or Statewide?

Goal 6: Develop an instrument to assist DSU consumers to inform all disability support organizations in OK. This would complement the Transition Planning Folder and Keeping Track of Your Progress tools. It will be disseminated to parents, students, teachers and other stakeholders.

#### Transition and Employment Committee Activities:

Activity 1 - Invite transition teams to present the progress of their team plans, including best practices, at the quarterly ORC meetings.

Activity 2 - The DSU Transition Coordinator will share Indicator 14 – Post-School Outcome reports provided by the Oklahoma State Department of Education, Special Education Services with the committee.

Activity 3 - ORC will support participation of Oklahoma Transition Council (OTC) including its collaboration with National Centers - NSTTACC - National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT).

Activity 4 - Highlight Success Stories of transition students with legislators in each region. There are plans to do this activity.

Activity 5 - Annually review the State Department of Education, Special Education Child Count Data to study trends and report to DSU in order for the DSU to have an awareness of future needs of both consumers and personnel.

Activity 6 - Invite local workforce development board and youth committee representatives to attend ORC quarterly meetings to report on the efforts made toward employment for persons with disabilities within their area.

Activity 7 - Develop an instrument to assist DSU consumers to inform all disability support organizations in OK. This would complement the Transition Planning Folder and Keeping Track of Your Progress tools. It will be disseminated to parents, students, teachers and other stakeholders. Develop one document, double sided with the disability specific organizations by disability category, specifically those listed in the IDEA including Mental Health.

#### Response from DSU to SRC Input and Recommendations

The DSU concurs with the SRC's position and recommendations as stated in this section. The DSU continues to have an extremely cooperative, productive, and interactive relationship with the Oklahoma SRC. The DSU administration fully participates in the SRC activities including their quarterly meetings. Designated DSU

liaisons attend and fully participate in SRC committee meetings and serve as associate members of the SRC. The DSU also continues to work with the SRC on joint projects. The SRC's involvement in the development and revision of agency policy has been of particular value in identifying consumer issues related to policy and in developing rules that respond effectively to both client and agency concerns. Formal planning meetings for the state plan included the SRC program manager as a member of the team, as well as for both divisions of vocational rehabilitation and visual services strategic planning teams. The DSU and the SRC are committed as partners in leading the Oklahoma Workforce System towards enhanced accessibility for all individuals, including those with disabilities.

#### Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System

- (a) Request for Waiver of Statewideness. When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:
- (1) a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;
  - (2) the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
  - (3) requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

This is not applicable to the Oklahoma Vocational Rehabilitation program.

- (b) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System. Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:
- (1) Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;
  - (2) State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;
  - (3) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;
  - (4) Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and
  - (5) State use contracting programs.

The Department of Rehabilitation Services, designated state unit, (DSU) enters into appropriate cooperative arrangements with, and utilizes the services of, various state and local agencies and programs. DSU coordinates with these agencies and programs to ensure people with disabilities receive appropriate services. These agencies and programs include:

#### Oklahoma ABLE Tech

##### Coordination with Assistive Technology Programs

Oklahoma ABLE Tech (ABLE Tech) (Oklahoma's AT Act Program) and the DSU have partnered to provide statewide assistive technology (AT) services and programs. Additionally, ABLE Tech has established a proactive marketing strategy to regularly and consistently provide DSU personnel with ongoing information regarding ABLE Tech's State Level and State Leadership programs and services. This new marketing calendar shares content 50 weeks of the year to provide focused AT information to increase employment opportunities for DSU job seekers with disabilities.



The mission of Oklahoma ABLE Tech is to get assistive technology “AT” into the hands of Oklahomans with disabilities through activities that provide increased access and acquisition. The DSU has a long standing history of working closely with Oklahoma ABLE Tech to enhance the provision of assistive technology services across the state.

Oklahoma ABLE Tech receives \$99,000 in state appropriations through a line item on the DSU’s budget. In turn, DSU contracts with Oklahoma ABLE Tech for assistive technology related activities. Oklahoma ABLE Tech will continue as a subcontractor to DSU for the implementation of assistive technology related activities through a contractual agreement.

Oklahoma ABLE Tech – Assistive Technology: Device Demonstration and Device Short Term Loan  
Oklahoma ABLE Tech is required by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) under the Assistive Technology Act (ATA) of 1998 as amended to implement device short-term loan programs and device demonstration programs. In pursuit of this mission, ABLE Tech has partnered with DSU to achieve AT outcomes for DSU job seekers by purchasing \$92,500 of assistive technology.

#### Current Project Status

During FFY 14, the Division of Visual Services (DVS) loaned 89 devices and 109 demonstrations occurred for AT categories of vision, daily living, hearing, learning cognition and computer access. During FFY14, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) loaned 3 devices and 22 demonstrations occurred. The Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) are renewable on an annual basis utilizing the federal calendar year.

In January 2015, DVS partnered with ABLE Tech to begin an “iPad Demonstration Initiative”. ABLE Tech provided 12 iPads to be placed in each DVS field office in the state to provide consumer demonstrations. DVS staff is able to demonstrate the built-in accessible features and specialized applications of the devices.

#### Goal

The DVS will continue to operate a device short-term loan program and device demonstration center utilizing AT that has been purchased by both ABLE Tech and DVS.

#### Strategies

- Support DVS with information on interagency loans, device materials, emerging application technology, and knowledge of funding options by holding trainings and email updates.
- Invest in new equipment as ABLE Tech funding allows.
- ABLE Tech will market DVS device short-term loan program and device demonstration center to stakeholder groups, such as disability related organizations, parent support groups, providers and agencies by conducting overview presentations, quarterly newsletter articles, and fully accessible web site.
- Continue use of the Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs, Federal Data Collection web system to collect and report demonstrations and short term equipment loans.

#### Measures

- DVS will increase the number of individuals that have access to AT in the short-term loan program by 10%; from FFY14 which was 89.
- DVS will maintain an outcome performance measure in which 91% of the individuals that accessed AT in the short term loan program were able to make an AT decision.
- DVS will increase the number of demonstrations by AT category to individuals by 20%; from FFY14 which was 109.
- Each DVS field office which operates a “VS iPad Initiative” will complete 48 demonstrations.

- DVS will maintain the outcome performance measure of 95% of individuals having had a demonstration being able to make an informed choice about AT.

#### Oklahoma ABLE Tech – Alternative Financing Program & Access to Telework Fund

Oklahoma ABLE Tech is required by ACL to implement state financing activities. In pursuit of this goal, DSU has contracted with ABLE Tech for thirteen years to operate an Alternative Financing Program (AFP) and an Access to Telework Fund (ATF) program. State appropriations are utilized for this contractual arrangement. These programs have created an innovative alternative for individuals with disabilities to borrow money at a low interest rate to purchase needed assistive technology and equipment to enhance their ability to live independently and successfully telework. To date, the program has utilized \$455,000 in State and private funds as cash match to receive \$1,955,854 in Federal funds and has leveraged \$5.6 million in BancFirst funds toward 977 loans with 97% of all loans paid in full by the borrowers. ABLE Tech in partnership with the Oklahoma Assistive Technology Foundation has established a direct loan program for individuals with disabilities to borrow up to \$1,500 to purchase assistive technology. The loans were made to Oklahomans in need of assistive technology and equipment needed for telework opportunities. ABLE Tech has annually provided the DSU Commission for Rehabilitation Services with a progress report on all loan and default activity of these programs. Additionally, ABLE Tech has annually provided the DSU Executive Director with a written report on all programmatic activity.

#### Current Project Status

The Alternative Financing Program (AFP) and the Access to Telework Fund (ATF) program contract also continued during FFY14. During FFY14, 47 AFP loans in the amount of \$303,373 and 18 Telework loans in the amount of \$89,443 have been provided to Oklahomans to purchase assistive technology and equipment. The contract is renewable on an annual basis utilizing state appropriations and the state calendar year.

#### Goal

DSU will collaborate with ABLE Tech to offer state financing programs to DSU job seekers to provide an alternative to funding assistive technology.

#### Strategies

- Provide quarterly updates to DSU on the outcomes and successes of individuals that purchased assistive technology through an AFP/ATF at the ABLE Tech Consumer Advisory Council meetings.
- ABLE Tech and DSU web sites will link to each other as a resource to Oklahomans with disabilities.

#### Measures

- ABLE Tech will maintain the outcome performance measure of 94% for individuals that acquired AT through the AFP or ATF and could only access AT through one of the following ACL measurements:

1. Could only afford the AT through this program
2. AT was only available through this program
3. AT was available through another program but the wait was too long and/or the program too complex

#### Oklahoma ABLE Tech – AgrAbility

FFY 14 was the final no cost extension year in which Oklahoma AgrAbility received federal funds from the USDA. The funded grant officially ended on April 14, 2015. At this point in time, ABLE Tech, in partnership with the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Services (OCES) continues as an affiliate AgrAbility Project known as Ag4Life. Ag4Life provides Oklahoma farmers/ranchers with information pertaining to various statewide agricultural resources via Information and Referral, the internet and also provides AT device demonstrations

and short-term loans through ABLE Tech's Demo/Loan Program which can be accessed at:  
<http://oec.okstate.edu/loan/>

In FFY14, 30 client cases were closed.

OSU OCES did not apply for continued AgrAbility funding for FFY 14; therefore, the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project will become a national affiliate project. ABLE Tech will continue to provide information to DSU field staff about agriculture cases annually through the DSU new employee academy training. DSU agricultural job seekers may continue to utilize ABLE Tech for device demonstration, device short-term loan, device reutilization and state financing.

Oklahoma ABLE Tech – Creating an Accessible Workforce System for All -Accessibility Support and Training  
Oklahoma ABLE Tech partnered with the DSU to provide training and technical assistance to Oklahoma's Workforce System. This partnership focuses on accessibility for all job seekers to all levels of the Workforce System. Working with the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED), ABLE Tech brought sharper focus on developing and employing more Oklahomans with disabilities. ABLE Tech provided Access for All Academies in the Fall 2014:

- Identify gaps in employment between people with disabilities and people without disabilities.
- Route participants to Oklahoma ABLE Tech Access for All website: <http://weba.im/76p>
- Discussion of different disabilities and how they may change someone's interaction with the physical and technology worlds
  - o Vision, such as low vision, color blindness, and total blindness
  - o Hearing, such as partial or full hearing loss
  - o Mobility, such as limited dexterity or quadriplegia
  - o Cognitive, such as traumatic brain injury or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- Discuss and show some accessible and inaccessible physical environments
  - o Key points:
    - ☐ Peoples' disabilities do not inherently limit their interactions with the world, inaccessible environments create barriers
    - ☐ Accessibility needs to be considered up front, not after the fact
- Discuss and demonstrate individual accommodations and auxiliary aids to help with communication with people with disabilities in the workplace and learning environment.
  - o Key point: Accommodations are often free or very low cost
- Legal overview: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Federal Rehabilitation Act both protect the rights of qualified people with disabilities in different facets of life
  - The ADA applies to a broad group
  - Title I protects all aspects of employment
  - Title II protects access to public programs, services, and activities
  - Title III protects access to private programs, services, and activities.
  - The Rehabilitation Act applies to the federal government and some federal contractors
  - Section 503 protects all aspects of employment for recipients of federal funding, private or public. Recent changes to Section 503 are significant
  - Section 504 protects access to federal programs, services, and activities
  - Section 508 details standards that make information and communication technology more accessible

Access for All Academies – Fall 2014 - Day Two

- Introduction to information and communication technology accessibility
  - o Underlying philosophy, concepts, and definitions

- o Explanation of how people with different disabilities may interact differently with technology, including websites and software
- o Discussion of assistive technology that helps people with disabilities to interact with computers, websites, and software effectively
  - Key point: people with disabilities have more opportunities now than ever before to use information and communication technology effectively and efficiently.
    - Discussion of laws like the ADA and Rehabilitation Act in the context of technology
- o Key point: technology is widely used to communicate and to provide access to programs, services, and activities and should be accessible
  - Overview of the Accessibility Integration Plan, which helps to identify key websites and software used by participants in the Workforce System
  - Discussion of how technology accessibility fits into a number of roles within an organization
  - Discussion of some of the elements that make technology more accessible
- o Key point: It can be easy to begin to create more accessible content, and may not require technology experts
  - Quick overview of accessibility considerations in social media platforms, like Twitter and Facebook
  - Demonstration of how some of the elements that make technology more accessible actually help people with disabilities to use websites and software
  - A walkthrough of some basic testing techniques to test websites for accessibility, aimed at less technical staff

#### Spring 2015: Regional Academies and Technical Assistance

The Access for All Academies set the foundation for the ABLE Tech Regional “Access for All Academies” and technical assistance for the spring. The purpose of the regional academies was to:

- Provide a foundation of understanding of accessibility in the built environment and in technology
- Specify gaps in the workforce that we can all help close with a concerted effort around training and technical assistance
- Raise awareness and aptitude in thinking about Access for All in the Workforce System
- Help ABLE Tech and DSU better target potential audiences for Regional Academies, with better systemic understanding of how accessibility fits into the workforce

Access for All Regional Academies took place in five separate parts of Oklahoma. Two were held in five regions statewide; Central, Northeast, Southwest, Southeast, Northwest.

The Regional Access for All Academies introduced topics related to accessibility in the built environment and technology. The morning of each Academy focused on accessibility in the built environment as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Federal Rehabilitation Act. The afternoon focused on accessible technology, including accessibility on the web and in Microsoft Word.

The Oklahoma ABLE Tech Program, through its partnership with the DSU, assists workforce partners in ‘Thinking Accessibility’ while serving People with Disabilities. This continued partnership will focus “Accessibility = Access for All” within the Oklahoma workforce system. The Access for All is a standard that has been set for the system that is designed to be the springboard to success for Oklahoma’s business and job seekers in reaching Oklahoma’s Goal of Wealth Generation.

#### Scope of Work:

Summary of Site Visit Findings- ADA physical elements – Strategy/Next Steps

- Prepare and distribute “Tool Kit of Solutions”- a checklist of the physical elements reviewed during 2015 site visits, current status, meets/does not meet guideline, ADA guideline, remedy, resources, timeframe for completion, date of completion
- Landlord responsibilities fact sheet: new construction and leases
- Certificate of completion for remediation of items
- Sites will self-assess every two years using Tool Kit of Solutions listed above
- Site point of contact will send an updated checklist to the DSU ADA Coordinator
- o Implement site review prior to renovations and new construction, DSU ADA Coordinator will provide technical assistance
- Future Webinars:
  - o “Access for All” Academy summary to provide the baseline training content
  - o Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities
  - o Landlord lease discussion, or shared responsibility situations

#### Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Program Review Focus on Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC)

Technology Accessibility Program Review performed to identify key technology tools and resources for consumers and internal audiences using the Accessibility Integration Plan to identify and prioritize technology tools used by external consumers and internal staff.

- o Assist OESC to assure accessibility of new website through assessment, consultation, or other means
- o Assist OESC to assure that accessibility is part of their technology procurement process
- o OESC State office web and procurement training

#### Technology Accessibility Integration Plan

- o Identify technology tools such as web applications, website, documents, and/or multimedia
- o Identify owners and managers of identified tools
- o Formulate basis for technology accessibility training and technical assistance
- o Identify relevant practitioners and leadership for focused training
- o Assess tools for accessibility
- o Assist in technology barrier removal

#### Future webinars:

- o Technology Accessibility 101
- o Accessibility in Word
- o Accessibility Testing on the Cheap

#### Incorporated the ADA 25th year Anniversary

- o Oklahoma Office of Attorney General - Disability Employment Law Conference: Disabled to Enabled

#### Outreach to Workforce Sites and Employers

Access for All Assistive Technology and Information, demonstration areas co-located within workforce center sites.

Display with poster that provides a website link to the following materials and messages for Workforce staff, employers, and regional disability committees

- o Fact sheets: employment and accommodations, assistive technology flow chart, ADA and leases, effective communication, service animals
- o Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act fact sheet
- o What's possible: case studies/fact sheets highlighting accommodations and successes on the job. Pull together resources from ODEP/DOL What Can you Do campaign.org, RespectAbility, Job Accommodations Network (JAN.org), and PEAT Works
- o Analyze possibility of creating assistive technology demonstration centers in Workforce Centers. Meet with Local Workforce Development Board Disability Committee (LWDB)

#### Employer Outreach

- o Explore the DSU business services framework
- o DSU ADA Coordinator
- o DSU Workforce Development Board Representatives
- o Develop informational material and/or training for employers
- ☐ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- ☐ Other relevant laws and best practices

#### Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Law – Federal 508 refresh

- o Amend law
- o Maintain advisory council
- o Provide training and technical assistance as needed (with Office of Management Enterprise Services (OMES), Higher Education, Career Technology system)
- o Assist with state complaint and oversight process

#### Deliverables

- o Newsletter (every other month, will include a tip for built environment and virtual)
- o AT Weekly email
- o Update ABLE Tech Workforce partner website and share resources

#### Outreach to other core programs

- o Higher Education
- o Career Technology (Adult Basic Education (ABE), High School Equivalency (HSE))
- o Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Programs)

#### Accessibility work with private sector companies

- o ACT WorkKeys
- ☐ Continue working with DRS outreach efforts to improve the accessibility of the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) product for individuals with hearing loss and/or blind and visually impaired
- ☐ Determine cost per student for end of year assessment as well as national cost

#### Thunderbird and Crossroads Clubhouses

The DSU entered into contracted agreements with the Thunderbird Clubhouse in Norman and Crossroads Clubhouse in Tulsa, both of which are certified through the International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD). The agreements are for establishing employment services for DSU clients with severe mental illness for the purpose of obtaining and maintaining employment. These services are based on the ICCD Standards for Clubhouse Programs.

## State Use Program

The State of Oklahoma recognizes the value of people with significant disabilities by having established a State Use Program that provides jobs for people with significant disabilities in producing products and services that can be purchased from a state contract for state use. The jobs range from products sorting and repackaging to the provision of services such as janitorial, maintenance, security, lawn care, and trash pickup.

Each vendor to the State Use program must demonstrate that a minimum of 75% of their work force is comprised of persons with severe disabilities. During state FY 2015 one of the vendors for State Use was required to report as to why their percentage of severely disabled workers had fallen below the required level. As it happened, there was a clerical error which resulted in the low number. Subsequent reporting proved to demonstrate that the vendor in question does in fact employ more than the required percentage of severely disabled personnel. In another matter one vendor had dropped their workers compensation coverage which resulted in the cancellation of their contract.

By state statute, the administrator of the Division of Visual Services of the DSU, or a representative designated by the administrator, serves on the executive committee of the Oklahoma State Use Program. At present, this committee position is held by the contract monitor for non-medical vendors to DSU.

The State Use Program continues to utilize a system of purchasing through a recognized portal system. All state agencies are required to purchase off of the portal contract before seeking goods or services elsewhere. There is a process in place that assures state entities of being able to acquire an exception when State Use vendors aren't able to provide the goods or services needed, either by quality or competitive price.

The State Use committee meets regularly throughout the fiscal year to perform its main function of approving or disproving competitive pricing for State Use program goods and services. A subcommittee meets as needed to review pricing requested by State Use vendors, whether for a new product or service or to adjust prices upward when warranted. This subcommittee makes its recommendations to the full State Use committee once it has determined fair market value in line with competitors outside of the State Use program. This assures the taxpayers of the State of Oklahoma that the goods and services procured through the State Use program will be in line with the current market.

The DSU administrator or his/her designated representative will engage in a strategic role to encourage vendors to increase competitive employment, develop relationships and outreach, and review data for potential improvements. Training is necessary on the philosophy of upward mobility and competitive employment and is aided by the annual training conference for State Use vendors. The administrator and administrative assistant for State Use this year attended the SUPRA Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona to further this goal. Many comprehensive presentations were given during this out of state conference to share helpful insights for Oklahoma into new goods and services and better delivery.

## Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs

The DSU partners with the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) to co-locate a VR counselor within the Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center and the Southwest Oklahoma Juvenile Center to work with youth with disabilities. The DSU also partners to co-locate a VR counselor who is dedicated to working within OJA facilities and through the Oklahoma Department of Human Services facilities including group homes, short-term and long-term facilities, treatment centers, etc.

The VR Counselors connect with youth upon intake, encourage application at appropriate ages, complete vocational evaluations, and provide additional services to youth transitioning out of the facilities. The VR

counselors also work closely with OJA to assist the youth in getting resources they need to increase their chances of being successfully employed and decrease the recidivism rate upon release.

#### Oklahoma Department of Corrections

The DSU partners with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (ODOC) to provide VR services to offenders with disabilities and the exchange of electronic medical records from the ODOC to DSU.

The DSU has the primary responsibility to evaluate and determine eligibility of individuals in order to receive Vocational Rehabilitation services leading to an employment outcome. In this capacity, DSU requests medical/psychological records from providers including ODOC. The goal of this collaboration is to support offenders' activities related to accessing Vocational Rehabilitation services and expedite the secure and efficient transfer of medical/psychological records in an electronic format from ODOC to DSU.

#### Oklahoma NOW IS the Time (ONIT)

The DSU partners with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to focus on helping youth adults with mental illness and coordinating connections, resources, and referrals for services in the areas of education, employment, housing, maintaining mental/emotional health, and legal/system related needs. Many of the youth have goals tied to going to school, getting/maintaining a job, moving into their own place, having meaningful relationships, getting their driver's license, getting a car, etc. Transition teams of ONIT staff, local providers, DSU counselors, and others help the youth and work with their families in these areas.

This is a federal grant program helping five sites in Oklahoma (Red Rock Behavioral Health Services, Northcare, and HOPE Community Services), Okmulgee, and Washington Counties. The providers will have a contract with the DSU to provide job placement for those involved in ONIT and referrals to expand their opportunities for other DSU job seekers served.

#### (a) Coordination with Education Officials. Describe:

- (1) The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.
- (2) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:
  - (A) consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
  - (B) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;
  - (C) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
  - (D) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

#### Coordination with Education Officials



The DSU will maintain a formal interagency agreement with the State Educational Agency (SEA) as well as relationships at the local level with LEAs. The focus of our work will be to forage those relationships and partner with stakeholders to provide services to youth and students with disabilities to help them prepare for life after high school, including, but not limited to, further education/training, competitive integrated employment, independent living and social skills, self-determination, and self-advocacy. It is our intent to perform outreach to underrepresented groups, such as those on Section 504 Plans, youth in foster care, adjudicated youth, out-of-school youth, and those with other disabilities not documented on a 504 or IEP.

The DSU will utilize all methods of communication and interaction to afford parents and students/youth the opportunity to fully participate in the planning for their vocational goals. DSU staff will attend meetings at schools to the best of their ability when invited and notified by school personnel. DSU staff will provide information and referral resources to schools, parents, and other stakeholders about the VR process as well as other existing resources to help prepare for employment.

The DSU will coordinate services with local educational agency staff to help prepare youth and students with disabilities for competitive integrated employment. DSU staff will share results of the vocational evaluation and other assessments, as well as progress reports for various work experiences with school personnel for the purpose of including information in the IEP and transition planning process. The DSU will work with school personnel to not only have input into the IEP process but also to access a copy of the IEP for assistance with coordination with the VR IPE.

The DSU will work with the SEA and LEAs to negotiate payment for services as relevant and appropriate for the implementation of transition planning and coordination. Special education and related services, including assistive technology, required to complete educational programs toward high school completion is the responsibility of the local schools. The DSU will provide funding for services as agreed upon to help youth and students prepare for competitive integrated employment. The DSU will seek every opportunity to partner with the SEA, LEAs, other agencies, organizations, families, and businesses to provide activities and resources to prepare youth and students for competitive employment.

The DSU will interact with the SEA and LEAs to identify youth and students with disabilities in the public school systems. The DSU will perform outreach to charter schools, virtual educational programs, homeschool networks, and other partners to identify youth and students with disabilities who need transition services. The DSU will utilize annual Child Count information from the SEA to help identify low incidence disabilities across the state.

- (a) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations. Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

#### Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit and For-Profit Organizations

##### Community Rehabilitation Service Providers

DSU has contracts with private non-profit, for-profit, and government Community Rehabilitation Service Providers (CRPs) of Supported Employment and other employment programs for individuals with significant barriers to employment. CRPs request the opportunity to provide Supported Employment, employment and retention (i.e. short term job coaching), job placement, JOBS (short-term placement), work-adjustment training, employment support and transitional employment services for DSU job seekers. DSU approves contracts based on pre-established criteria, including acceptable levels of payment for outcomes achieved.

DSU will continue to increase employment CRPs to meet the needs statewide focusing on rural areas. The Employment Support Services Unit (ESS) educates potential CRPs and DSU field staff of available contracts. The list of contracts and CRPs is available on the DSU intranet.

### Centers for Independent Living

The DSU maintains cooperative relationships with the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) through regular communication including attendance at SILC quarterly meetings. DSU encourages the CILs to provide informative training programs to the DSU field staff to access services available through the CILs. DSU is committed to working with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to improve relationships between the CILs and DSU.

### Initiatives include:

- Educate DSU field staff about services available from CIL's.
- Encourage the CILs to communicate with the DSU field staff to determine other services that could be created and provided by the CILs to the DSU.
- Encourage CIL's to market their services to DSU field staff.
- Survey DSU field staff about CIL usage and needs.
- Improve communication between the SILC and DSU.
- Find and/or develop services that will enhance the independent living concerns for consumers.
- Market these services to the DSU's field staff and consumer service professionals for inclusion in case services and plans.
- Continue to educate the SILC about the components, requirements and limitations of the contract and purchasing systems.
- Attendance of Director and/or designee at quarterly SILC meetings.
- Attendance of the DSU director in major SILC and CIL meetings where services are discussed and planned: ie., creation of the state plan for Independent Living.
- DSU (administration, accounting, and legal) will meet annually (or as needed) with the SILC Executive Board to address issues and difficulties.

- (a) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services. Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

### Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

DSU enters into contracted agreements with CRPs for the provision of Supported Employment services. There are 53 CRPs with a total of 180 contracts. Assigned staff continues outreach activities in an attempt to recruit new CRPs.

DSU maintains an MOA with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) describing collaboration on delivery of Supported Employment services and transitional employment services.

The DSU has initiated a pilot project with ODMHSAS and five-community mental health centers to provide individualized career planning and employment to individuals between the ages of 16-25 with serious mental illness.

DSU maintains an MOA with the DDS to improve employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The MOA outlines the coordination of services and identifies the DSU as first dollar funding source for competitive integrated employment. DDS continues to provide extended services for individuals with intellectual disabilities in Supported Employment services by utilizing the DDS Home and Community Based Waiver (HCBW) and DDS state dollars. The HCBW is utilized to provide the long-term on-going supports. DSU has maintained an MOA with DDS since 1989. Under the MOA, the HCBW is also utilized to provide pre-vocational services.

- (a) Coordination with Employers. Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:
- (1) VR services; and
  - (2) transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

### Coordination with Employers

The DSU is committed to working with businesses and employers in recognizing competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in serving job seekers with disabilities. Further, the DSU will focus upon pre-employment transition services when serving students with disabilities.

### Utilization of Statewide Partners

In order to more effectively interface with Oklahoma companies, the DSU will maintain regular contact with statewide partner agencies that regularly contact and serve Oklahoma companies as a part of their mission. The DSU Business Services Coordinator (BSC) will meet with each statewide agency partner to discuss how to work together and leverage resources which can benefit job seekers with disabilities in competitive employment positions. Informational sharing with agencies will be mutually beneficial, enhancing the DSU's ability to expand hiring opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and meeting workforce needs for Oklahoma companies. The DSU BSC will:

- Conduct meetings with statewide partners to discuss areas of mutual concern, protocol for working with each agency and their respective field staff.
- Attend regular meetings of any and all relevant agencies/entities who directly or indirectly work with Oklahoma employers as a part of their primary mission.
- Obtain relevant data on number and types of companies who are seeking employees and ascertain job ready qualifications requirements and/or specific training needs.
- Develop presentations for use with statewide partner agencies which will describe the type of job seekers available through the DSU. The presentation will describe the type of skill sets available to companies through DSU job seekers, ability to secure specific job training to meet the company's needs and all associated benefits regarding the hiring of job seekers with disabilities, including incentives and any on-going assistance from the DSU. The presentation will also open a dialogue regarding the fears, misinformation, misconceptions, increased costs of doing business, etc. which need to be addressed.
- Develop MOUs/Partnership Agreements to execute with Oklahoma companies, whether in writing or by mutual consent.

### Strategic Alliances & Intel

The DSU's ability to coordinate with local, state and federal entities is imperative for success. Community and economic development partners are the best link to disseminating the DSU's message to employers. Many of

whom are federal contractors, especially in manufacturing. These partners potentially hold the key to the resources necessary in order to facilitate the DSU mission of increasing quality employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities.

Through direct communications with strategic partners, the DSU will be able to ascertain information on prospective businesses which may be relocating to our state, especially in regard to the types of companies, numbers of positions, and skill sets they intend to hire. Additionally, partners have the ability to provide DSU with intelligence on existing business expansions, especially at the local level where economic developers and chambers of commerce may potentially be points of contact.

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce's Regional Development Specialists (RDS) conducts Business Retention & Expansion activities in their respective service delivery areas, which gathers first-hand information from companies on issues such as expansion planning, new product lines, and employment needs. The DSU partners with RDS's statewide to utilize their expertise in working with businesses and employers in service delivery areas.

### Regional Approach

In order to facilitate a regional approach, the DSU will take advantage of regional alignment of federal and state partners. In some cases, DSU staff will coordinate with multiple individuals who represent the same programs, such as workforce development boards, manufacturing extension agents (MEAs), small business development centers (SBDCs), and regional development specialists, who serve smaller geographic regions.

Each region of the state is unique and has its own distinctive economic development climate and structure. The intent in this regard will be to develop regional working meetings with statewide partners to incorporate DSU business development staff into the regional economic development landscape. The quarterly informational sharing meetings will be designed to inform partnering agencies regarding their programs, initiatives, and activities. This will become a valuable integration piece providing a platform to inform partners regarding DSU programs, services, products, and needs; while offering DSU business development staff the ability to form valuable networking connections and educate them on the activities of partnering entities, particularly as it relates to economic development.

### Internal Coordination

Dissemination of information and the ability to coordinate and communicate with all DSU field staff responsible for job development activities will be critical to the overall success of efforts in achieving goals regarding statewide outreach to businesses and statewide partners. In order to better understand the role of the individual job development specialists and the processes of business contacts and customer job readiness, the DSU BSC will:

- Meet individually with all DSU field staff and attend meetings where appropriate.
- Become familiar with DSU field staff and their responsibilities.
- Discover how DSU staff responsible for job development is currently contacting companies and what outreach methodology is being deployed statewide.
- Determine if the DSU message to business entities is consistent within each area across the state and exactly what that message is.
- Understand the criteria currently being used to evaluate which job seekers are job ready and how deficiencies in their ability to become job ready are being addressed.

### Business Services Team

In order to address the need for providing unified job development services throughout the state, the DSU BSC will form a Business Service Team (BST) which will be designed to interface with statewide partners and private sector businesses in their assigned regions. The ability to provide a structured approach to building a unified business team is vital to efficiently serve the employment and job readiness needs of counselors and job seekers.

The DSU BST will consist of DVR & DVS staff members who are engaged in job development activities. However, job development field staff will remain under the supervision of the program manager in their respective units.

To facilitate branding of the DSU BST, it will be necessary to change staff titles to align with a professional business nomenclature. Therefore, moving forward the following titles will be adopted for the DSU BST staff: Business Services Director (BSD), Business Services Representative (BSR), Business Advisory Council Coordinator (BACC), and Business Services Specialists (BSS), former Job Placement Specialists.

#### Staff Development Aspects

Following evaluation of DSU BST staff to determine current skills levels and identify gaps, the DSU BSD will meet individually with designated staff in order to make recommendations as to how to maximize their skills and abilities, and develop a training curriculum designed to meet those needs. Moving forward, quarterly learning sessions will be conducted to continually upgrade the knowledge and skills base of the DSU BST in regard to best practices in expanding employment opportunities for DSU job seekers utilizing available resources. The DSU BSD will:

- Provide appropriate training opportunities for DSU BSS, or designated staff who have been assigned to work directly with businesses.
- Initiate quarterly retreats for all DSU BST staff to share ideas and provide training opportunities.
- Familiarize DSU BST with economic development entities in their respective regions and seek opportunities to facilitate their introduction to them.
- Develop a working relationship with the DSU BST to brief them on the economic development assets in their region and integrate them into the business and economic development landscape.
- Facilitate their introduction to economic development entities to create connections to employment and networking opportunities in their regions.
- Introduce DSU BST members wherever possible to local, regional, state and federal leadership individuals in the community and economic development arenas.
- Familiarize DSU BST members with the economic development entities in the state, regarding their structure, missions and programs.
- Conduct ongoing training for DSU on national disability employment tools such as the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) and National Employment Team (NET) job opportunities.

#### Programs & Services

The need to broaden DSU employment services to the business community and DSU job seekers is evident by the lack of soft skills and actual work experience required by hiring entities. In order to address the deficiency among DSU job seekers, DSU BST and DSU counselors will become active in remedial learning activities to enhance the ability of DSU job seekers to find meaningful employment opportunities. The following initiatives will become a part of DSU services.

- Job Clubs
  - o Job Search Tools
  - o Interpersonal Skills

- o Resume Development
- o Cover Letter Construction
- o Interviewing Skills
- o Mock Interviewing
- o Appearance
- Internship and Work Experience Opportunities

#### Statewide Partner Entities

- Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance (OMA)
- Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC)
- o National Recruiting
- o Regional Development Team
- o Global Division
- o CDBG-EDIF
- o Oklahoma Works
- o Rural Action Partnership Program Advisory Team
- o Oklahoma Quality Jobs Program
- Oklahoma Career & Technology Schools
- o Small Business Development Directors
- o SET Program Directors
- State Office of Career Tech
- Oklahoma Small Business Development Centers
- U.S. and Oklahoma Small Business Administration
- USDA Rural Development
- Regional Councils of Government
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Regional Economic Development Partnerships
- Local Economic Developers
- Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
- Governor's Economic Development Marketing Team
- Oklahoma Department of Corrections

#### Transition - Pre-Employment Transition Services

The DSU will work with businesses to identify opportunities for youth and students with disabilities to prepare for employment through activities, such as job shadowing, internships (paid and unpaid), paid work experiences, summer programs, guest speakers, mock interviews, and career fairs. The DSU Business Services Coordinator will work with the DSU Transition Coordinator to seek out opportunities with the businesses across the state.

- (a) Interagency Cooperation. Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:
- (1) the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;
  - (2) the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;
  - and
  - (3) the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

#### Interagency Cooperation

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse

DSU maintains a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health Substance Abuse and Services (ODMHSAS) to improve the employment outcomes of individuals with serious mental illness. DSU Director is a voting member of the Governor's Transformation Advisory Board providing guidance on expenditures of federal mental health grants.

Initiatives include:

- Monthly Oklahoma Systems of Care Social Marketing Committee
- Monthly Oklahoma Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council
- Monthly Oklahoma Systems of Care State Advisory Team
- Monthly Oklahoma Health Care Authority Behavioral Health Advisory Council
- Participation in study teams and work groups as appropriate and necessary

The DSU has a second MOA for the Partnership for Infant's, Children's, Youth's and Young Adult's Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Health. The partnership ensures the creation and efficient operation of a unified and integrated system of care for all of Oklahoma's infants, children, youth, and young adults with or at risk for mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders (MEB's). This includes an array of prevention, education, outreach, service and support for them and their families.

The commissioners and directors of the child-serving state agencies will serve personally on the partnership alongside the Directors of the Oklahoma Family Network (OFN), National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Oklahoma, family members, youth, and young adults. The partnership meets two or more times annually to receive reports and give approvals for actions and initiatives.

The partnership monitors for the following outcomes:

- For all with or at risk for an MEB:
  - o Increased resiliency as shown by improved daily functioning
  - o Increased wellness activities and improved school/community functioning
  - o Reduced risk behaviors
- For all those identified with serious MEBs:
  - o Increased days at home and in school
  - o Improved grades and less detention and suspension
  - o Increased time periods with no contact with law enforcement
  - o Improved mental health functioning
  - o Success in decreasing substance abuse
  - o Having and making progress on wellness goals
- For young adults:
  - o Completion of educational goals
  - o Stable and meaningful employment
  - o Social connectedness
  - o Reliable transportation
- System Outcomes
  - o Increased and fully supported cross-system collaborative initiatives
  - o Transparency and accountability across systems, including data sharing
  - o Annual financial mapping to assist developing shared priorities
  - o Evidence based practice and an outcomes-driven service system
  - o Increased capacity, serving more families more efficiently and effectively

- o Joint budget requests that pertain to the prevention, early intervention, treatment and support for those with MEB disorders.

As a result of the second MOA, the DSU initiated a pilot project with ODMHSAS and five community mental health centers to provide individualized career planning and employment to individuals between the ages of 16-25 with serious mental illness.

Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) DSU maintains a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the DDS to improve employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities. DDS continues to provide extended services for individuals with intellectual disabilities in Supported Employment services.

Initiatives include:

Regular meetings with DSU programs managers, DSU programs field representatives and DDS staff. Monthly meetings address and solve problems identified by field staff of both agencies. Training to staff is based on challenges identified. DSU staff also provide individual case consultations at the request of the Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP), DDS staff and/or DSU staff.

Provide regular written reports to DSU Executive Staff to keep them informed of current field issues discussed at the monthly meetings.

DSU Programs Field Representatives serve on the Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council.

DSU Employment Support Services (ESS) staff and State level Transition Staff participate on the Employment First Alliance, which has a national goal of increased competitive integrated employment by 50% in the states. As a result of the Employment First Alliance, the Oklahoma Legislature passed the Employment First Law which became effective November 1, 2015.

DSU ESS staff and State level Transition Staff participate on the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) -DSU ESS staff represents DSU on the Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council.

DDS Staff serves on the Oklahoma Transition Council (OTC) which is chaired by the Statewide Transition Coordinator from the DSU. Statewide conferences, resources, technical assistance, and additional professional development come out of the OTC. Many issues and challenges are brought forth with a wide range of experts to assist the DSU and DDS in resolving them and achieving their goals.

The DSU Statewide Transition Coordinator will work with DDS staff to ensure staff from each agency, schools, families, and CRPs understand the changes in WIOA regarding sub-minimum wage, are well-trained, and that Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) are provided to students with disabilities accessing vocational rehabilitation services through the DSU.

The DSU ESS staff will work with DDS staff to ensure CRPs and staff at each agency is provided ongoing training and consultation required by WIOA for any youth with a significant disability hired at subminimum wage. The partners will also ensure the required reviews take place according to WIOA to ensure every opportunity for achieving full competitive integrated employment.

- (b) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development. Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State



rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

(1) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

(A) Qualified Personnel Needs. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

- (i) the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
- (ii) the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and
- (iii) projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

(B) Personnel Development. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- (i) a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;
- (ii) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- (iii) the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

## Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

### Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

#### Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

The DSU is committed to maintaining Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standards as set forth in section 101 of the Act. The DSU maintains a complete data system that facilitates the analysis of current and future personnel needs and resources. Data is continuously collected and updated allowing for retrieval of information to determine the DSU's profile of success in relation to the CSPD Plan.

The Professional Development Unit specifically assigned to the Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation and Visual Services, in cooperation with the Human Resources Unit for the DSU, maintains the database. Staff is required to provide updated educational and professional certification/licensure information whenever there is a change. The accuracy of this information is verified during the CSPD annual review.

The table below lists the current FTEs available and projections for replacements needed to adequately serve the DSU's job seekers. The numbers indicated are and continue to be based on historical and projected turnover rates.

<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Total Positions DVR/DVS</u>	<u>Current Vacancies</u>	<u>Projected Vacancies over the next 5 years</u>
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Programs Manager	25	3	4
Programs Field Representative	15	1	2
VR Specialist - Counselor	153	22	25
VR Specialist - Vocational Evaluator	8	3	1
Assistive Technology Specialist	8	1	2
Rehab of the Blind Specialist	19	4	5
Specialist on Deaf/Blindness	2	1	1

The DSU maintains a counselor to job seeker ratio of 1 counselor per an average of 95 job seekers; DVR average is 105 and DVS average is 57. The DSU will continue to focus on appropriate caseload size by ensuring services are provided to eligible individuals with disabilities who actively participate in the vocational rehabilitation program leading to competitive employment.

- (2) *Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel.* Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

#### Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

A variety of methods are used to address our current and projected needs for qualified rehabilitation personnel. Methods used include annual reviews of existing data, workforce planning using an established model, conducting outreach and networking, and the utilization of a Project Coordinator for Diversity Management position that focuses on recruitment of individuals with disabilities and others of minority backgrounds. The goals and activities listed below indicate the actions to take place during this plan year.

#### Goal

Using existing data and an established workforce planning model to identify current status and predict future needs of qualified rehabilitation personnel

#### Activity

- Identify current staff capacities and compare to future needs to identify gaps
- Initiate actions to fill the gaps through staff development, capacity building, and recruitment efforts

## Goal

Expand applicant pool for VR Counselor positions

### Activity

- DSU will fund two trips for recruitment by the DSU Project Coordinator. The dates and locations are yet to be determined.
- We currently have 18 staff taking advantage of the Agency's Educational Sponsorship Program. Of the 18, six are pursuing a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling, two are working on their Master's in Visual Rehabilitation Counseling, four are pursuing their Master's in a field related to their profession, four are working on their Bachelor's, one is pursuing an Associate's, and one is working on a Doctorate Degree. Spring 2015 Graduates, three Bachelors and one Master's in Visual Rehabilitation Counseling.
- To alleviate difficulties experienced with applicants being determined for CSPD eligible when applying for a VR Specialist II or above position, a new Family Description has been written and implemented with Human Capital Management (HCM). It clarifies that graduates of a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited master's program are to be deemed eligible without further review.

## Goal

Retention of qualified rehabilitation professionals

### Activity

- Provide for personal and professional growth by providing in-service development opportunities that enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Continue to offer a skill based pay adjustment for obtaining a professional certification or licensure appropriate with their position

### Relationships with Higher Education

There are two institutions of higher education in Oklahoma that prepare vocational rehabilitation professionals by awarding Masters of Science Degrees with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor emphasis. These programs are Langston University and East Central University. Langston University is recognized by RSA as a historically black college/university (HBCU). Both of these programs are Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited. Graduating from a CORE accredited program automatically qualifies its graduates to test for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification. As such, all the graduates shown in the table below have the credentials necessary for taking the CRC exam, thereby meeting the DSU's CSPD standard of a qualified rehabilitation professional.

In addition to the connection with Langston and East Central Universities, additional efforts enhance relationships with higher education. These are indicated in the goals and activities shown below.

## Goal

Foster beneficial relationships with higher education institutions

### Activity

- Attendance at state, regional, and national events on higher education
- Associate membership in the National Council on Rehabilitation Education
- Encourage staff to be guest speakers and become adjunct faculty

Enrollment and graduation information received from these programs is shown below:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Current Enrollment Level</u>	<u>Prior Year Graduate Level</u>
Langston University	108	40
East Central University	62	17

#### Relationships with Professional Organizations

The DSU recognizes the importance of maintaining collegial relationships with professional organizations whose missions relate to empowering individuals with disabilities. The goal and activities listed below are the efforts to aid in this area.

#### Goal

Expand relationships with professional organizations

#### Activity

- Support state, regional, and national professional organizations by:
  - o Staff attendance at events
  - o Encouraging staff to become members of their professional organizations
  - o Assisting organizations to hold their events in Oklahoma

As a strategy to increase recruitment and retention of a diverse professional counselor staff from traditionally underrepresented and underserved populations, the DSU has assigned a Project Coordinator position for national diversity recruitment of CSPD qualified staff. The Project Coordinator participates in career days and does class presentations designed to extenuate the positive value of DSU employment to students enrolled in CORE-accredited masters of rehabilitation counseling programs. During such presentations, the Project Coordinator discusses the State of Oklahoma's low cost of living, the potential benefits contained in the State's employee compensation package and the State of Oklahoma's Carl Albert Public Internship Program (a paid internship training program).

The aforementioned activities are accomplished on a national basis, with a particular emphasis, at colleges and universities which serve, predominately, student populations from traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations. Moreover, these activities occur at colleges and universities, which include but are not limited to: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), such as, Langston University, Southern University (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), and South Carolina State University; Historically Spanish-Serving Colleges (HSCs), such as, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (formerly, Pan American), University of Texas El Paso, California State University San Bernardino and the University of New Mexico-Highlands; and, Historically Native American Colleges, such as the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College (Weatherford), the College of the Muscogee Nation (Okmulgee, Oklahoma), the Comanche Nation College (Lawton, Oklahoma), the Pawnee Nation College (Pawnee, Oklahoma), Bacone (Muskogee, Oklahoma) and the University of Arizona (Tucson).

Moreover, the assigned Project Coordinator and other DSU staff will engage in outreach activities with colleges and universities which have special emphasis on programs serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired, such as, Louisiana Tech University-Ruston, University of Arkansas-Little Rock, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Mississippi State University's National Research and Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision. Also, the Project Coordinator will engage in outreach activities with colleges and universities that have rehabilitation counseling programs geared to serve individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, such as, Western Oregon University and Winston-Salem University.

Finally, the Project Coordinator counsels with potential interns and institutional instructional staff about the requirements for obtaining paid internship and performs liaison activities with the universities such as coordinating letters of support from the DSU for their grant writing efforts.

The DSU point of contact impacts diversity issues within programs, such as, Section 121 Oklahoma Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation, Inc. (CANAR), state and local Chambers of Commerce, city councils, Hispanic Chambers, Legislative Black Caucus and community-based rehabilitation programs.

#### Acquisition and Dissemination of Information to Staff

To round out a complete program of providing the most up to date information in the field of vocational rehabilitation, research and details of significance are disseminated to all professional and paraprofessional staff. Each year the Agency participates in the Fall and Spring National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) Conferences where new research is presented. Additionally, Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) documents are provided to all staff. Also as part of this program, materials are obtained and disseminated from a variety of seminars and conferences statewide, regionally, and nationally.

- (3) *Personnel Standards.* Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:
- (A) standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and
  - (B) the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

#### Personnel Standards

Although there is no longer a federal requirement, the DSU continues to follow the CSPD standard that was set in 1999 for all existing staff and qualified applicants for VR Counselor positions. At the request of the Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services, all applicants for the positions of counselor, field services coordinator, and programs manager are reviewed by the DSU expert on CSPD.

- (4) *Staff Development.* Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:
- (A) a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and
  - (B) procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

#### Staff Development

Bi-annually a comprehensive needs assessment is performed to afford continuing educational and in-service opportunities for the DSU professional and paraprofessional staff. From this assessment a Staff Development

Plan is formulated to address those needs. The goals and activities associated with staff development are detailed below.

#### Goal

Provide opportunities for increasing individual knowledge, skills, and abilities

#### Activity

Over 220 activities have been provided to staff since October 1, 2014 in areas of:

- o Autism
- o Transition
- o Ethics
- o Workforce Partnership
- o WorkKeys
- o AgrAbility – Ag4Life
- o Professional Conferences
- o Deaf/HOH
- o Variety of Disability Specific Trainings
- o Assistive Technology
- o Leadership
- o Diversity related conferences
- o Counselor and Support Staff Academies
- o Job Development
- o Mental Health and the impact of Mental Illness on the rehabilitation process
- o Unified English Braille for DVS Counselors
- o Core competencies training for managers, including Crucial Conversations, Crucial Accountabilities, and 7 Habits for Managers

- (5) *Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs.* Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

#### Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

##### Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit (DVR)

Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is a statewide program. It currently holds thirteen positions that address needs for persons with hearing loss. The Programs Manager supervises five counselor positions plus three rehabilitation technicians in offices located in both Oklahoma City and Tulsa and the counselors in these positions serve Oklahomans with hearing loss statewide. In addition, two other programs within the unit include the Interpreter Certification and Resource Center (ICRC) and the Interpreter Services Program. The ICRC is the certifying body for interpreters in Oklahoma, as well as monitoring and maintaining a registry of Interpreters. This program also supports and promotes the interpreter profession by providing resources, training, and interpreter mentorship. The Interpreter Service Program maintains interpreter contracts and schedules American Sign Language interpreters and Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART), a real time captioning service, as needed for agency staff and for consumers.

##### Hispanic Community Outreach

- Continue membership in local Hispanic Chambers of Commerce

- Continue participation with Hispanic Expos and other outreach activities around the state
- Use and ongoing review of current marketing materials – magnets and CDs in Spanish
- Continue support of Spanish translations of English forms and documents used by counselors and programs
- Continue to maintain Spanish Hotline
- Add Us In consortium - this DOL grant ended, however, the DSU will continue to develop best practices in employment targeting small businesses that are minority owned and people with disabilities from minority groups, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT), women, and veterans. The DSU will continue this effort by referring job seekers to local workforce system partners.
- A Hispanic counselor is involved in developing a job club curriculum along with the Transition Coordinator for one of the high schools that serves predominantly Hispanic students.
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce – new employment contract on Job Placement, Employment and Retention, and Supported Employment to serve Spanish speaking job seekers.
- SAVE Program - inter-governmental information service initiative which verifies the immigration status of benefit applicants. The SAVE Program has access to immigration status information from more than 100 million records contained in the Department of Homeland Security databases. By determining the immigration status of benefit applicants, SAVE helps authorized agencies ensure that only entitled applicants receive federal, state or local public benefits and licenses.

(6) *Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
 DSU coordinates its CSPD activities with those provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Through the DSU commitment with the Oklahoma Transition Institute (OTI), trainings for local educational agencies (LEA) and vocational rehabilitation counselors will assist with plans in coordinating CSPD activities. The Transition Coordinator also conducts annual training with all staff providing transition services, as well as quarterly calls about transition, and in-person small group training regarding IDEA, IEPs, and other school documentation.

(a) Statewide Assessment.

- (1) Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:
  - (A) with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
  - (B) who are minorities;
  - (C) who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;
  - (D) who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and
  - (E) who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.
- (2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

- (3) Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act .

## Statewide Assessment

In collaboration with the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council (SRC), the DSU divisions of vocational rehabilitation and visual services will follow the Model Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) methodology developed by InfoUse, Berkeley CA to conduct the needs assessment.

The model CSNA addresses rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of: individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services; minorities; individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by VR; individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system (other than the vocational rehabilitation program); youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities; and the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

The model CSNA process includes six steps:

1. Defining and establishing CSNA goals;
2. Developing CSNA plan for information and dissemination;
3. Gathering the information;
4. Analyzing the results and developing findings;
5. Developing the conclusions: Potential action strategies; and,
6. Informing state plan goals, priorities, and strategies.

The plan for the next three year statewide assessment is as follows:

Year 1 – The DSU and SRC will complete steps one and two, and initiate step three.

Step 1: Defining and establishing CSNA goals. During this phase DSU staff will review available disability data and reports to establish the nature of the potential VR population within the state as well as identify other agencies and organizations that are resources for information collection. Tables and summaries of relevant report findings will be assembled as a briefing book for use in establishing study goals.

Step 2: Developing CSNA plan for information and dissemination. During this phase DSU staff will develop a plan for collecting information, analyzing findings, disseminating results, and informing the state plan. The plan will include the identification of specific data, sources, and methods; data analysis; costs and timeline; and staffing or technical assistance needs.

Step 3: Gathering the information. During this phase DSU staff will initiate the collection of data from identified sources and provide a description of the information collection process.

Accomplishments:

- Work and advisory teams were established. Goals were defined.
- A work plan, timeline and dissemination plan were developed. Possible sources of data were identified including census data, state population estimates; labor and economic data; VR agency data.
- Work team initiated data gathering.

Year 2 – The DSU and SRC will complete step three.



Step 3 continued as described above.

Accomplishments:

- Work team began collection of data from identified sources. Multiple surveys were distributed to stakeholders. Public meetings were held to identify needs of partners such as schools, workforce, CRPs; consumers and the public.

Changes to be added to Step 3 due to WIOA:

- Additional plans were developed to include needs of youth and students with disabilities and clients of workforce. These plans include gathering existing data from IDEA/504 reports, existing data from external transition needs studies, data from the workforce development system, and including these topics in the public hearings.

Year 3 – The DSU and SRC will complete steps four, five and six.

Step 4: Analyzing the results and developing findings. Once all the data is collected it will be analyzed and organized by information goal and topic.

Step 5: Developing the conclusions: Potential action strategies. During this phase conclusions from work will be developed and potential action strategies generated for each need expressed in findings.

Step 6: Informing state plan goals, priorities, and strategies. DSU staff will develop recommendations from the CSNA to inform the State Plan.

Status:

- Due to the additional changes to Step 3 due to the WIOA, data collection is still ongoing but nearly complete. Analysis will begin upon completion. Estimated completion date and distribution for the report will be September 30, 2016.

(a) Annual Estimates. Describe:

- (1) The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services.
- (2) The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:
  - (A) The VR Program;
  - (B) The Supported Employment Program; and
  - (C) each priority category, if under an order of selection.
- (3) The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and
- (4) The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

## Annual Estimates

### Estimates of Individuals Eligible for Services

In 2014, the American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, estimated 331,028 Oklahomans age 18-64 had disabilities which is 14.4% of working age population who may be eligible for VR services in 2017.

### Estimates of Individuals Eligible for Services to Receive VR Services

DSU serves consumers under an Order of Selection and three priority groups. The number of such individuals who will receive services provided under Part B of Title I and under Part B of Title VI of the Act, including related estimated costs are as follows:

### Estimated Vocational Rehabilitation Services

<u>Category</u>	<u>Estimated Funds</u>	<u>Estimated Number to be served</u>	<u>Average Cost of Services</u>
Title I, Part B Priority Group 1	11,481,000	3,929	2,922
Title I, Part B Priority Group 2	13,617,000	4,659	2,922
Title I, Part B Priority Group 3	1,602,000	548	2,923
Title VI, Part B	300,000	64	4,700

(a) State Goals and Priorities. The designated State unit must:

- (1) Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.
- (2) Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.
- (3) Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
  - (A) the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
  - (B) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and
  - (C) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

#### State Goals and Priorities

The goals and priorities have been jointly developed with the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council (SRC). DSU participates in regular SRC meetings as well as participates in SRC subcommittee activities. The SRC also collaborates in drafting and revision of agency policy development, and meets regularly with the DSU Administration. Finally, revisions to the state plan were developed jointly, as well as revisions to the specific goals and priorities identified in this section.

In a joint effort with the SRC, the DSU DVR/DVS divisions formed work groups to develop measures and action steps to address the DSU organizational strategic plan goals and priorities. The goals and priorities were developed while reflecting upon the comprehensive statewide assessment latest findings, VR performance accountabilities, and meeting information from discussions with the SRC.

Oklahoma is implementing Performance Informed Budgeting which considers performance data when allocating financial resources. Progress to achieve statewide strategic objectives in priority areas categorized within five statewide goals is reported. The DVR/DVS statewide program area of Workforce Participation

reflects a Key Performance Indicator objective to Increase the percentage of DSU clients with disabilities who find employment from 50% in 2014 to 60% by 2018.

## Goals and Priorities

Goal 1: Deliver improved, quality services to Oklahomans with disabilities.

Objective I: Develop employer relationships and prepare consumers for employment opportunities

Key Performance Measure: Increase average annual wage of consumers with disabilities placed in employment  
Strategies:

- Align strategic and state plans with the Governor's Vision: Oklahoma Works.
  - o Local Workforce Development Board and Youth Committee representation (DVR/DVS)
  - o Increase Assistive Technology Outreach in the Tulsa office (DVS)
- Expand business relationships leading to career opportunities for consumers.
  - o Oklahoma Ventures Forum (DVS)
- Expand participation of consumers with disabilities on the OKJOBMATCH system, OK Career Guide, National Talent Acquisition Portal
  - o Support only systems that meet the Oklahoma Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Law for accessibility of digital services, and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Levels A and AA, for websites, web applications, and digital documents (DVR/DVS)
- Improve relationships with businesses and employers through the work of the Business Services Coordinator and unit
  - o Business Advisory Council expansion to Lawton and Woodward (DVR/DVS)
  - o Business Leader Meetings (DVR/DVS)
  - o Develop a business model statewide for Business Services (DVR/DVS)
- Focus on better wages and long term employment
  - o Importance of initial interview and comprehensive assessments (in-demand jobs) (DVR/DVS)
  - o Initiative to assist job seekers with tools for resume building, employability skills building (DVR/DVS)
- Expansion of Project Search sites at Embassy Suites Hotel in Norman and Renaissance Hotel in Bricktown, Oklahoma City (DVR/DVS)

Objective II: Lead Statewide Accessibility efforts

Key Performance Measure: Increase knowledge and awareness of accessibility issues

Strategies:

- Conduct statewide accessibility reviews with workforce system core partners
  - o DSU ADA Coordinator, DSU AT Coordinators and Specialists, and external partner contract, Oklahoma ABLE Tech (DVR/DVS)
- Conduct accessibility training for the workforce system
  - o DSU ADA Coordinator, DSU AT Coordinators and Specialists, and external partner contract, Oklahoma ABLE Tech (DVR/DVS)
  - o DSU Information Technology Operating Committee currently developing specific language to require state agencies RFP's ensure accessible products are being purchased (DVR/DVS)
  - o Support the Oklahoma Office of Management Enterprise Services that state agencies appoint an Accessibility Compliance Representative to oversee state agency accessibility standards (DVR/DVS)
- Increase consumer access to affordable assistive technology (AT) to help remove barriers to employment

- o Agreement with Oklahoma ABLE Tech to increase use and loan of equipment for job seekers (DVS)
- o Establishment of new AT lab in Tulsa (DVS)
- o Agreement with Langston University to train job seekers on basic keyboarding skills (DVS)
- o Agreement with Freedom Scientific to provide low cost JAWS software to blind and visually impaired state employees and families (DVS)
- o Low cost solutions with Computers for Blind (DVS)
- o DSU Counselors utilize Apple Technology (DVS)
- Increase number of blind and visually impaired employed in state government by 10%
- o Communication and Outreach to HR directors to educate about hiring blind job seekers (DVS)

Objective III: Create new and expand existing consumer, business, and vendor partnerships

Key Performance Measure: Partnerships for successful consumer employment placements

Strategies:

- Career guidance and counseling based upon job opportunities and labor market statistics
- o Developing a contract with Subway Restaurant to promote careers for blind job seekers to start-up Subway franchises (DVS)
- Focus upon the case process upfront to work with job seekers to provide employment information during the planning process before writing a plan for employment (DVR/DVS)
- o Engage consumers in preparation for employment (DVR/DVS)
- o Counselor contact with client (DVR/DVS)
- o Consumer Employment Outcomes (DVR/DVS)
- o Community Outreach (DVR/DVS)
- o Consumer's soft skills (DVR/DVS)
- o Career Club – eight-week training module focusing on transferable skills to include resume building and career preparation (DVS)
- Focus upon comprehensive assessments as the core part of the employment plan. This will assist job seekers in focusing on their employability and skill deficiencies (DVR/DVS)
- o Resume prior to writing an employment plan and identify job seeker skills (DVR/DVS)
- o On in-demand jobs to sustain household wealth (DVR/DVS)
- o Focus job seeker's on "Know your full potential" (DVS)
- o Focus on quality career employment opportunities with higher wages (DVR/DVS)
- Focus upon pre-employment transition services (DVR/DVS)
- o Summer Youth Skills Build program (DVS)
- Expand mental health partnerships (DVR)
- Addressing community outreach
- o Implement action plans to expand community outreach and partnerships, as written in the Performance Management Process (PMP) (DVR/DVS)
- o Timeliness regarding case management (DVR/DVS)
- Opportunities for job seekers to focus on skills learned in out-of-state training centers and programs (DVS)
- Input from blind consumer groups on perceptions of quality outcomes (DVS)
- o TIPS program input on Ipad touch (DVS)
- o Engage with consumer organizations: Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council, Oklahoma and National Federation for the Blind and Oklahoma and American Council of the Blind (DVS)

Goal 2: Provide program results that are accountable to the public and our customers.

Objective I: Meet or exceed all state and federal productivity requirements

Key Performance Measure: Increase number of successful employment outcomes for consumers with disabilities

Strategies:

- Timeliness and movement of caseloads more quickly (DVR/DVS)
- Collect and use information from surveys, studies and data to evaluate program effectiveness and implement improvements
  - o Statewide needs assessment process, in partnership with SRC (DVR/DVS)
  - o Pre/Post evaluation for every service program (DVS)

Objective II: Provide quality services with all decisions supported by information that is factual, available to all, and consistent

Key Performance Measure: Quality decisions for consumer reaching employment goal

Strategies:

- Produce quality vocational evaluations and assessments of consumers
  - o Reviewing vocational evaluation assessment tools that are up to date and accessible (DVR/DVS)
  - o Develop a self-employment protocol (DVS)
  - o Self-Confidence and Self-Direction programs (DVS)
- Strengthen consumer job readiness
  - o Adult Blind Living Evaluation (ABLE) Program and sequel program. Evaluating job seekers on life skills and other skills as needed (DVS)
  - o Training Adult Program (TAP) program working with job seekers on travel skills, home management, daily living, and braille/technology (DVS)
- Focus on working with blind consumers in office setting and staff impact on consumer's life
  - o Collaborating with the GALT Foundation (Temporary Staffing Service Agency) to provide on-the-job training to job seekers in an office setting within the DSU (DVS)

Goal 3: Strengthen Our Workforce

Objective I: Recruit, select, and retain engaged employees

Key Performance Measure: Improve retention and attrition rates

Strategies:

- Increase accountability for results
  - o Increased performance requirements on Transition Outreach (DVR/DVS)
  - o Increased quality placement and community outreach (DVR/DVS)
- Improve recruitment of quality applicants, maintaining Certified Rehabilitation Counselor standard (DVR/DVS)
  - o DSU moving towards highlighting benefits package on position announcement (DVR/DVS)
- Increase academic development of staff (DVR/DVS)
  - o Staff participate in out-of-state training centers and consumer organizations conventions and meetings (DVS)
  - o Provide educational sponsorship for employees (DVR/DVS)
- Competitive Salaries
  - o Career progression and market salary adjustments
- Supervisors and Counselors striving toward the same goal (DVR)

Objective II: Develop new and enhance existing training, mentoring and educational development opportunities

Key Performance Measure: Improve performance outcomes

Strategies:

- Implement the Coaching for VR Quality Outcomes curriculum (DVR/DVS)

- In-depth training on blindness
- o Staff informed of and support rehabilitation organizations (DVR/DVS)
- Association for Education and Rehabilitation (AER), Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB), National Rehabilitation Association (NRA), Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR), National Federation of the Blind (NFB), American Council of the Blind (ACB), Unified English Braille (UEB), Low Vision Training, Association of Vision Rehabilitation Therapists

Objective III: Implement a program of organizational growth

Key Performance Measure: Increase employee engagement and leadership development

Strategies:

- Provide a new employee academy (DVR/DVS)
- Support leadership programs (DVR/DVS)
- o National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (NRLI)
- o Wicked Innovation: Next Generation Solutions (WINGS)
- o Governor's Executive Leadership Program
- Develop and implement a Supervisor Core Competency Academy (DVR/DVS)
- o Skills Building curriculum includes: Crucial Conversations; Crucial Accountability; Leading at the Speed of Trust; Seven Habits of Highly Effective Managers
- Implement online case process (DVR/DVS)

Goal 4: Strengthen Our Infrastructure

Objective I: Implement IT improvements

Key Performance Measure: Meet IT requirements by enhancing IT partnerships

Strategies:

- Utilize IT resources and tools to improve or streamline service delivery
- o Advocate for free App tools on Iphones for job seekers (DVS)
- o Freedom Scientific JAWS program – affordability for state employees and their families (DVS)
- o Simplifying the Telephone Reader Service (DVS)
- o DSU Committee on Information Access (CIA) (DVR/DVS)
- Implement state and agency business strategies and requirements implemented through Information Technology Oversight Committee (DVR/DVS)
- o Developing specific requirements for state agency RFP's to ensure accessible products are purchased through the state procurement process (DVR/DVS)

Objective II: Implement progressive policy review and change

Key Performance Measure: Improve business processes

Strategies:

- Streamline and implement policy change (DVR/DVS)

(a) Order of Selection. Describe:

- (1) The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.
- (2) The justification for the order.
- (3) The service and outcome goals.
- (4) The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

- (5) How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and
- (6) If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

## Order of Selection

The DSU operates under an Order of Selection. Policy reflects the need for order of selection, priority group definitions, implementation, closing and opening of priority groups, continuity of services, and information and referral services.

## Order of selection

(a) Need for order of selection. The Department, in consultation with the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council, has determined, due to budgetary constraints or other reasoned limitations that it cannot serve all individuals who are determined eligible for DVR and DVS services. The Department consults with the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council regarding the:

- (1) need to establish an order of selection, including any re-evaluation of the need;
- (2) priority categories of the particular order of selection;
- (3) criteria for determining individuals with the most significant disabilities; and
- (4) administration of the order of selection.

(b) Priority groups. It is the policy of DRS to provide vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals under an order of selection. Under the order of selection, the Department has established three priority groups on the basis of serving first those with the most significant disabilities. Every individual determined to be eligible for DVR and DVS services is placed in the appropriate priority group based upon the documentation used to determine eligibility and/or vocational rehabilitation needs. Selection and placement in a priority group is based solely upon the significance of the eligible individual's disability, and is not based upon the type of disability, geographical area in which the individual lives, projected type of vocational outcome, age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, or national origin of the individual. The priority groups are:

- (1) Priority Group 1. Eligible individuals with the most significant barrier to employment. A most significant barrier is one that includes a mental or physical disability resulting in serious limitations in three or more functional capacities and can be expected to require multiple services over an extended period of time.
- (2) Priority Group 2. Eligible individuals with significant barriers resulting in serious limitations in at least one, but not more than, two functional capacities and can be expected to require multiple services over an extended period of time.
- (3) Priority Group 3. Eligible individuals with disabilities not meeting the definition of individual with a significant barrier.

(c) Implementation. Prior to the start of each fiscal quarter, or when circumstances require, the DRS Director will determine in which priority groups new Individualized Plans for Employment will be written and initiated.

The Director may restrict the writing and initiation of new Individualized Plans for Employment within a priority group to cases having eligibility dates falling on or before a specified date providing that all consumers in higher priority groups are being served. Considerations in making this determination will include, but not be limited to, the projected outcomes, service goals, expenditures, and resources available for each priority group. Projected costs and resources for each priority group will be based upon costs of current Individualized Plans for Employment, anticipated referrals, availability of financial resources, and adequacy of staffing levels. The Director will implement actions under the order of selection through written notice to DVR and DVS staff. The written notice will specify the implementation date of the action and direct DVR and DVS staff on how to handle cases by priority group and application date. DVR and DVS staff will inform each eligible individual on their caseloads:

- (1) of the priority groups in the order of selection;
- (2) of the individual's assignment to a priority group; and
- (3) of the individual's right to appeal that assignment.

(d) Closing and opening priority groups. When all or part of a priority group is closed, designated cases within that priority group without a written IPE will be placed on a waiting list after the individual has been determined to be eligible. No IPE will be written for cases on the waiting list. Staff will continue to take applications, diagnose and evaluate all applicants to determine eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs, find the individual eligible when documentation supports such a decision, then place each eligible individual's case in the appropriate priority group. If an eligible individual is placed in a closed priority group, his or her case will go on the waiting list and no IPE will be written or initiated. The DRS Director will notify DVR and DVS staff in writing when all or part of a closed priority group is opened. When this directive includes new applicants who are found eligible, individuals already on the waiting list within that same priority group will be given priority over new applicants. When all or part of closed priority groups are opened, staff will contact individuals on the waiting list to develop and implement their Individualized Plans for Employment using the priorities in Paragraphs (1) - (3) of this Subsection:

- (1) contact individuals within the highest open priority group first, Most Significant being the highest of all priority groups;
- (2) within each opened priority group, staff will contact individuals on the waiting list in order of application date, earliest application date first; then
- (3) staff will contact individuals whose cases will remain on the waiting list to explain how their cases will be handled.

(e) Continuity of services. Any individual with an IPE that existed prior to the date all or part of that individual's priority group was closed will continue to receive services as planned. Such an IPE may be amended if the changes are necessary for the individual to continue progress toward achieving an appropriate employment outcome, or are otherwise necessary within policy. Persons requiring post employment services will also be provided the necessary services regardless of priority group assignment.

(f) Information and referral services. Information and referral services will remain available to eligible individuals who are not in an open priority group. These individuals will be given information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining or regaining employment, and will be appropriately referred to Federal and State programs (other than the



vocational rehabilitation program) including other components of the statewide workforce investment system in the state. No IPE will be written to provide such services to these individuals.

Time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order  
&

Estimated Average Length of Services For Successful Cases by Priority Group

For Priority Group 1:

Number of individuals to be served = 3,929  
Outcome goals successful closures = 2,357  
Outcome goals unsuccessful closures = 1,572  
Average days between plan signature and closure = 1,022  
Average cost of services = 2,922

For Priority Group 2:

Number of individuals to be served = 4,659  
Outcome goals successful closures = 2,795  
Outcome goals unsuccessful closures = 1,864  
Average days between plan signature and closure = 892  
Average cost of services = 2,922

For Priority Group 3:

Number of individuals to be served = 548  
Outcome goals successful closures = 329  
Outcome goals unsuccessful closures = 219  
Average days between plan signature and closure = 1,039  
Average cost of services = 2,923

(a) Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.

- (1) Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.
- (2) Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including :
  - (A) the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and
  - (B) how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds

DSU will continue to provide opportunities for Oklahomans with the most significant barriers to employment to enter competitive employment through the use of funds received under Title VI, part B supplemented by Title I, part B to purchase time-limited Supported Employment services. DSU purchases services from qualified CRPs through contracts based on established rates for services.

Under state contracting laws, new contracts are established when requested by a CRP that meets minimum qualifications. DSU has contracts with private non-profit, for-profit, and government CRPs of Supported

Employment and other employment programs for individuals with significant barriers to employment. Contracts are paid on an outcome basis. The contracts emphasize quality service at both the individual and contract levels. Through payments at the completion of each milestone, multiple opportunities are created for the individual and the DSU counselor to assure that a quality service has been delivered and that competitive integrated employment has been achieved. Contracts also emphasize controlling average cost of service per individual, while providing payment incentives for difficult to serve individuals in these categories: individuals with felony conviction, high school students classified as severely emotionally disturbed, individuals with HIV/AIDS, or individuals who are legally blind, deaf or deaf-blind. An incentive is also provided to CRPs who assist individuals with obtaining employment with hourly wages of more than \$14.45, 90 days after case closure.

There are no restrictions on the types of disabilities served through the contracts, although the majority of individuals served continue to be those with intellectual disabilities or serious mental illness as a primary diagnosis. Although most CRPs serve a diverse population of individuals with the most significant barriers to employment, mental health CRPs continue to serve exclusively individuals with serious mental illness.

Mental Health CRPs have the option of providing Supported Employment. DSU, the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services are collaboratively seeking strategies for improving services and enhancing service capacity for individuals with serious mental illness.

DSU will provide outreach to increase the number of community mental health CRPs contracting to provide employment services in an effort to improve the employment outcomes of individuals with serious mental illness. The DSU has initiated a pilot project with ODMHSAS and five community mental health centers to provide individualized career planning and employment to individuals between the ages of 16-25 with serious mental illness.

DSU will provide outreach to increase the number of Rural Employment CRPs in order to increase services and better meet the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in the rural areas of the state.

In an effort to increase services, DSU is initiating a customized employment program. The DSU is developing an expansion plan to fund the additional services required under the Work Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

- (a) State's Strategies. Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

How the agency's strategies will be used to:

- (A) achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;
- (B) support innovation and expansion activities; and
- (C) overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

State's Strategies

DSU will include required strategies and use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and the supported employment programs. DSU is vested in innovative and expansion activities, whereas, funding is available to identify barriers to employment and search for solutions to identified barriers. DSU will update strategies when there are material changes in the information that require the description to be amended.

- (1) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

Methods to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities

DSU Program areas that are utilized to expand and improve services include:

#### Veterans Initiative

DSU Personnel consisting of Administrators from DVR and DVS along with the DSU Business Coordinator are involved in Quarterly Local Community Collaborative meetings chaired by the Community Employment Coordinator of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. The purpose of this group is to expand vocational opportunities to homeless veterans, of which many have disabilities. This group will be expanding and will be covering the Eastern part of the state in 2016. This collaboration allows the DSU to develop partnerships who have a vested interest in providing work opportunities to disabled veterans and other Oklahomans with disabilities.

#### Social Security Administration Certified Benefits Planners

DSU has three certified Social Security Administration (SSA) Work Incentive Counselors working and co-located within Workforce Centers and another three rotating between the remainder of the Workforce Centers and DSU offices. Workforce Center staff and DSU Benefits Planners collaborate to assist job seekers receiving SSA benefits. DSU Benefits Planners explain the importance of working at the highest possible level and above SSA's Substantial Gainful Activity benchmark. Job seekers are provided general information concerning the impact of work on SSA disability benefits. Upon applying for VR services, these individuals would then also receive detailed reports illustrating the impact of work on other benefits and services the individual may be receiving, such as TANF, SNAP, UI compensation, Veteran's benefits, etc. DSU Benefits Planners address concerns of individuals with disabilities about the possibility of losing benefits and help them understand and maximize their work incentives.

#### Ticket to Work Program

Coordinated activities under Ticket to Work are delivered by a statewide Ticket to Work Coordinator. The coordinator will organize activities within the DSU and with partnership employment networks (EN's) to ensure the needs of ticket holders are met at a maximum level. Ongoing outreach efforts will be conducted to recruit new partnership employment networks in order to provide more opportunities to assist ticket holders in reaching Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level employment outcomes. The coordinator will continue to oversee the ticket to work hotline and will provide ticket holders with information and referral for state VR, partnership EN's, and external EN's.

#### Autism Program

DSU Autism Program continues as a partnership between the DSU and Goodwill Tulsa. This program currently operates two locations and with a third site expansion planned. Curriculum is continuously developed to accommodate the needs of students. The program will expand to include deaf and hard of hearing autistic students. Success for this program reflects an 80%-90% success rate of students finding employment.

#### Employment and Skills Development Services project

In collaboration with the Community Partnerships Unit of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, the DSU, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), joined a group to address the Lincoln County Partnership for Child Well-Being. The group will carry out a study of the county's child protective system to identify strengths, weaknesses and improvements needed within the child and family serving system in order to develop a plan of action to enhance the well-being of children.

The partnership approved a plan to establish an Access to Care Committee and a Task Force for the Improvement of Family Economic Security. The DSU will provide weekly on-site assistance to individuals in Lincoln County in securing and/or maintaining DSU services. Further, the DSU will assist the team with identifying individuals in the county, both youth and adults, eligible for DSU services.

#### Job Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (JDVRTAC) Grant

The DSU Innovations Unit is coordinating the process of submission of an Intensive Technical Assistance grant with the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The grant has been awarded to the DSU along with ten other VR agencies nationwide, affording access to a very strong network of technical assistance providers under the JDVRTAC umbrella which includes ICI, the University of Washington, the University of Arkansas Currents, Jobs for the Future (JFF), the United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN); the Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD); and Powers, Pyles, Sutter, and Verville, PC (PPSV). Apart from the intangible benefits this learning opportunity entails, the total services, travel and consultancy gained with this one year grant adds resources to the agency equivalent to what it would obtain through thousands of dollars in contractual arrangements.

The purpose of JDVRTAC is to identify, adapt, embed, and sustain job-driven practices into vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies. These practices will lead to improved employment outcomes for people with disabilities by developing a knowledge base on the following four topical areas, 1) Labor market information (LMI), 2) Services to employers, 3) Building and maintaining employer relations, and 4) Services to providers of customized and/or employer driven training.

The DSU goals are to align apprenticeship and internship opportunities as a way to create meaningful paid training experiences for job seekers and articulate paid training experiences with long term employment for job seekers while impacting the quality and breadth of employer relationships.

In sum, the JDVRTAC Intensive Technical Assistance grant will provide an excellent opportunity for the DSU Innovations Unit, Data Unit, Business Services Coordinator, job placement specialists, Transition Program, Visual Services and Vocational Rehabilitation divisions to work together toward better alignment of internships and apprenticeships with quality long term employment. More importantly, it will provide an opportunity to examine what is in place and develop a working system of employer relations that can integrate effectively the contributions of counselors, Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), job placement specialists and all others involved in securing well-paying jobs for DSU job seekers.

Other DSU program areas that are utilized to expand and improve services include:

- Visual Services Center in Tulsa and Oklahoma City
- DVS Technology Lab and Training Lab in Tulsa and Oklahoma City
- DVS Adult Blind Living Evaluation (ABLE) offered statewide
- DVR Technology Lab and Training Lab in Oklahoma City
- Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB) transition work adjustment program
- Partnering with OSB for Vocational Evaluations
- DVR OK Assistive Technology Demonstration and Lending Lab
- Project Search: Expanding to new locations statewide and standardization programs. Corporate partnerships continue to expand.

- Business Enterprise Program – partnering with Oklahoma Career Tech in development of new vendor training and efficiency programs.
- Office of Juvenile Affairs collaborations
- Department of Veterans Affairs collaborations
- On-line applications
- Expansion of grant opportunities
- Outreach to faith based and community programs to bridge barriers to Oklahomans to succeed in the workplace, school and at home. This initiative is designed to find and enhance comparable benefits
- Mental Health Individualized Career Planning Model Pilot Project
- Customized Employment
- JOBS Contract
- Continue statewide investigation efforts to locate ‘cold case’ clientele
- Wellness Recovery Action Plan Training (WRAP)
- Oklahoma Baptist Prison Ministry program working with adults and youth
- Langston University Agriculture Career Pathways Experience for youth

(2)How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.

#### Assistive Technology and Devices provided to individuals with disabilities

The DSU delivers assistive technology statewide for job seekers in their journey to employment. Assistive technology specialists complete a variety of different assistive technology assessments and evaluations for job seekers, business work sites, and workforce system partners. The types of evaluations are home modifications, vehicle modifications, personal mobility needs, computer access, worksite modifications, activities of daily living, communication school accommodations, and accessibility reviews. Assistive technology specialists focus on the reported obstacle, rather than the disability diagnosis. A big part of an assistive technology evaluation is to identify what the real problem or obstacle is for the individual job seeker or business work site.

- (3) The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

#### Outreach to Minorities, Most Significant Disabilities, Underserved Populations

##### Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit (DVR)

The staff of DVR Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDHH) Unit are committed to providing communication access and employment opportunities for those with hearing loss. All staff has a competency of American Sign Language fluency, ranging from novice to expert and SDHH also employs a trilingual staff member allowing provision of services to Spanish speaking individuals with hearing loss. SDHH provides services to adults and transition aged youth with hearing loss across the state and works closely with the Oklahoma School for the Deaf, which provides office space a counselor on campus to provide transition service to Deaf and hard of hearing youth at the school.

SDHH has been working with DVR field offices across the state providing resource kits which include assistive listening devices and interpretive equipment to assist in communicating with individuals with hearing loss. SDHH also provides consultation regarding assistive technology devices, medical hearing devices such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, and cultural mediation for Deaf job seekers with agency staff, employers, and organizations.

Each staff member is equipped with a videophone provided on their agency computers, which allow for direct contact and telecommunication between SDHH staff and those who are Deaf and use sign language. Kiosks have also been installed with videophones so consumers can make phone calls independently for their job search and employment needs.

#### Hispanic Community Outreach

For consumers that speak a language other than English, this unit has access to translation/interpreter services for other native languages.

- Spanish translated Transition brochures and checklists to be disseminated to high school students and parents about Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- Two Bilingual counselors serve job seekers statewide in outreach efforts
- Videophones will be utilized for outreach to the Hispanic population statewide, reaching within the rural communities.
- An emphasis on all divisional brochures to be translated into Spanish to provide information to Hispanic individuals.
- Assists the SRC with translation of brochures and documents into Spanish.
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce – new employment contract on Job Placement, Employment and Retention, and Supported Employment to serve Spanish speaking job seekers.

#### American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs (AIVR)

The newly hired DSU Tribal Liaison will work with the DSU and Oklahoma Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (OKTVR) programs. The liaison's role will be to assure that appropriate referrals are made between the DSU and OKTVR programs. The liaison will assist with collaboration between programs to assure that eligibility decisions and individualized plans of employment are developed with collaboration between both programs.

The DSU currently has MOUs in place with OKTVR Tribal programs to assure that vocational rehabilitation services are being provided on a consistent basis with effective collaboration between both programs.

The DSU has VR specialists assigned to each high school in Oklahoma. If the OKTVR program has transition services in their grant, DSU staff refers job seekers to their program, and they refer job seekers to the DSU. DSU staff will visit schools together, introduce OKTVR staff to school personnel, conduct joint trainings, and attend local transition team meetings. Co-shared services may apply, however, if the OKTVR does not have transition services in their grant, DSU staff share their programs contact information with the youth and family, connect with OKTVR staff, share their application when they reach the age of 18, and conduct joint community trainings together.

DSU and OKTVR personnel currently participate in monthly meetings chaired by the OKTVR Directors. The DSU will provide new employee academy training to OKTVR employees when resources allow. The DSU and OKTVR programs both participate in the annual Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR) meetings, and have open lines of communication between the DSU Director, Division Administrators, Field Service Coordinators and Program Managers of the DSU, as well as OKTVR Tribal Directors.

#### Road to Independence (RTI)

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) received a federal grant from the Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, to plan for how to build on the capacity of state and local systems to prevent long-term homelessness among at-risk youth with foster care involvement; the DSU is a critical partner in this initiative with DHS. The focus is on youth 14-21 years of age in housing, education, employment, well-being, and permanent connections.

In Oklahoma County, there are 3 primary needs/issues, 1) inadequate independent living and transition services, 2) placement instability of youth while in child welfare custody; and 3) lack of housing options for youth and young adults after exiting Child Welfare custody. The effort coordinates support to the local Oklahoma County DHS Child Welfare Office 55A to improve transition services, placement stability, and permanency for youth 14-18 years of age in child welfare custody.

Partners include DHS, Oklahoma Independent Living programs, DSU, and NorthCare. The DSU has a designated rehabilitation technician that DHS workers can contact when a youth is placed to locate the VR counselor to contact and make a referral, when appropriate. Plans to expand in the Tulsa area are pending.

#### Strategies for Recruitment Efforts of Professional Counselors from Minorities, Underrepresented and Underserved Populations

The DSU's goal is to continue to foster and maintain our long-standing relationships with East Central University (Ada, Oklahoma) and Langston University (the State of Oklahoma's only historically black university). DSU staff members are committed to working with these institutions of higher education, which are the only CORE-accredited rehabilitation counselor programs within the State of Oklahoma. This commitment is shown by their willingness to work as adjunct professors, guest lecturers and project advisory committee members. Moreover, one part of the DSU Director's strategy is to assign the Project Coordinator for National Diversity Recruitment, as a liaison to Langston University, which produces counselors on its Oklahoma City and Tulsa campuses; in order to, help facilitate activities between the DSU and Langston related to the development and recruitment of qualified professional counselor staff members for the DSU.

Additionally, the Project Coordinator is assigned the responsibility to act as the DSU Director's designee or point-of-contact with groups that impact counselor diversity issues within the DSU, such as, Oklahoma AIVR Programs, the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation, Inc. (CANAR), state and local Chambers of Commerce, city councils, Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, the Oklahoma Legislative Black Caucus and community-based rehabilitation programs.

- (4) The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

#### Methods to Improve and Expand VR Services for Students with Disabilities

The DSU provides pre-employment transition services in its programs for youth and students and will work with agency staff to identify additional programs and services the staff wants to implement and provide in their local areas. Formal MOUs, contracts, and other agreements will be generated with partners to diversify and expand what can be provided to students in this area.

- (5) If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

### Establishing, Developing or Improving Community Rehabilitation Programs

The Employment Support Services (ESS) Unit is responsible for coordination and monitoring CRPs. An ESS technical assistant is assigned to every CRP with whom DSU contracts, with the responsibility to work with the CRP, counselor, employer and individual to ensure an effective working relationship is maintained and to resolve any disputes that may occur. The ESS Unit also provides training to the CRPs to keep them up-to-date on current best practices in the field.

#### (6) Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

##### Strategies to improve performance with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA

The DSU will focus upon the case process upfront to work with job seekers to provide employment information during the planning process before writing a plan for employment, thus engaging job seekers in their employment goals.

The DSU will target success by focusing upon comprehensive assessments as the core part of the employment plan. This will assist job seekers in focusing on their employability and skill deficiencies.

The DSU is setting higher expectations through the work with Coaching for VR Quality Outcomes, utilizing more resources statewide, and connecting with more national initiatives and programs such as the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP). The DSU will also focus on the new statewide increase in the Basic Living Requirement, and intensive technical assistance through internships. In focusing on these higher expectations, the DSU will develop its business services model and will define clear roles for job placement specialists.

The DSU is committed to meeting the performance accountability measures and working with core program partners, as outlined under section 116 of WIOA.

#### (7) Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

##### Strategies for assisting with other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities

Oklahoma is focused upon accessibility for all job seekers and businesses and employer's work sites throughout all levels of Oklahoma Works. Governor Mary Fallin implemented the Oklahoma Works Initiative focusing on Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs. This initiative promotes a statewide vision, aligns and uses state data, expands effective partnerships, and modifies the use of resources and incentives to support an integrated vision. The Oklahoma Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED) is playing a key role as the vehicle to establish the state vision for workforce and economic development integration.

Working with the GCWED, the system partners bring sharper focus on developing and employing more Oklahoman's with disabilities. The DSU director is an ex-officio member of the GCWED. The DSU also has staff on the Workforce System Review Team and State Youth Council, both are teams that support the work of the governor's council. Further, the DSU has representatives on each local workforce development board and youth committees. This involvement means the DSU is committed to working to develop creative solutions that



expand and improve Oklahoma's workforce, thus increasing opportunities for people with disabilities to ensure complete access to employment statewide.

The DSU is leading Oklahoma's Workforce System towards enhanced accessibility. The objective is to provide equitable services to individuals with disabilities and to ensure that all Workforce System partners comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

#### Access for All Initiative

The Access for All initiative within Oklahoma Works places a focus on recruitment, hiring, and promotion of individuals with disabilities in the state of Oklahoma's workforce. Access for All focuses on the Oklahoma Works system partners as well as employers in the state. This initiative provides training, consulting, and resources to ensure that individuals with disabilities are intentionally included in efforts to achieve greater household wealth for Oklahomans. Access for All equips Oklahoma's Workforce System with knowledge and resources to make it more accessible to individuals with disabilities that utilize one-stop system programs in person, on the phone, or through the web. Access for All is brought to Oklahoma Works through a partnership between the DSU and Oklahoma ABLE Tech (Oklahoma's Assistive Technology Act Program).

To help build a foundation for the Access for All initiative, the DSU and Oklahoma ABLE Tech (OKABT), partnered to provide regional Access for All academies, webinars, newsletters, and weekly tips statewide. The one-day seminars focused on accessibility in the built environment and in technology, as well as some of the legal drivers to create accessible points of contact between workforce system partners and job seekers in Oklahoma. These academies are critical training components to help staff close the gaps in workforce utilization, income, and poverty among people with disabilities. To best prepare job seekers to gain employment, workforce system staff must be aware of the benefits and requirements for ensuring accessible workforce services and environments. The academies help workforce system staff focus on the requirements for better employer engagement and promoting physical and programmatic accessibility to employment and training services for individuals with disabilities.

The Access for All webinar series will bring focus on accessibility, legal, policy, and technology as they relate to job seekers with disabilities. Topics will include: An Overview of the Access for All Initiative in Oklahoma; Technology Accessibility 101: An Introduction to Accessibility in the Web; Accessibility Basics in Microsoft Word 2010; Basic Technology Accessibility Testing; An Overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; and Workforce Center Structural Accessibility Toolkit Update.

The Access for All weekly tips and newsletters are scheduled emails to workforce system partners that will provide continued coverage and the most current accessibility information regarding physical and programmatic accessibility, including assistive technology.

#### Oklahoma Employment Security Commission – Modeling the way to “Thinking Accessibility”

The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC), through the Oklahoma Works centers, develops and support increased employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. OESC, through partnerships, improve service delivery for training and employment opportunities and outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed, and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits. Staff work daily with a variety of partners locally and across the state that provide services to individuals with disabilities and the general population either directly at the Oklahoma Works centers or through referrals to partner facilities.

Oklahoma Works center staff routinely refer individuals with disabilities to the DSU for more intensive training and job placement opportunities. DSU has three certified Social Security Administration (SSA) Work Incentive

Counselors working and co-located within Workforce Centers and another three rotating between the remainder of the Workforce Centers and DSU offices. Staff collaborates to assist job seekers receiving SSA benefits, specifically when referred by center staff; a DSU Benefits Planner will explain the importance of working at the highest possible level and above SSA's Substantial Gainful Activity benchmark. Job-seekers are provided general information concerning the impact of work on SSA disability benefits. Upon applying for VR services, these individuals would then also receive detailed reports illustrating the impact of work on other benefits and services the individual may be receiving, such as TANF, SNAP, UI compensation, Veteran's benefits, etc. DSU Benefits Planners address concerns of individuals with disabilities about the possibility of losing benefits and help them understand and maximize their work incentives.

OESC began a two-phase project focusing upon physical and programmatic accessibility entitled "Thinking Accessibility" within the Workforce Centers, UI Service Centers, UI Adjudication Centers and the Appeal Tribunal. This partnership brings the DSU and Oklahoma Able Tech (OKABT) together to provide the resources and tools to assist OESC on continuing their commitment in serving individuals with disabilities.

#### Phase 1 – "Thinking Accessibility"

The DSU, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Assistive Technology Specialists, conducted physical accessibility reviews of all Workforce Centers statewide. The physical site accessibility review instrument included an assessment of parking area(s) and pathway(s), entrance(s), bathroom(s), water fountain(s), public telephones, and fire alarm systems. Final assessment reports were provided to each OESC Program Manager III and the center director of the Workforce Centers for final discussions and understanding of findings.

The OKABT program created individual Accessibility Toolkits for each Workforce Center in the state along with the UI Service Centers, UI Adjudication Centers and the Appeal Tribunal. The Accessibility Toolkit abstracted findings from the physical accessibility reviews conducted by DSU, and added suggested remedies and, where feasible, possible expected costs associated with the suggested remedies. Each Toolkit includes the full itemized set of findings and suggested remedies as well as a summary report for each area. The Toolkits will serve as the foundation for an ongoing effort to make the state's Workforce Centers and OESC offices more accessible to job seekers with disabilities.

As OESC reviews the Accessibility Toolkits, both DSU and OKABT will be available to provide additional guidance and technical assistance. This will help OESC finalize budgets, coordinate efforts, and create timelines for remediation where suggested in the Accessibility Toolkit.

#### Phase 2 – "Thinking Accessibility"

The DSU and OKABT will provide a focused effort to work with OESC to identify ways to improve accessibility of technology resources that it provides to job seekers in the state. OKABT will first work to analyze information and communication technology procurement and development within OESC, then identify and help to narrow gaps identified in this analysis. Over time, OKABT will help OESC to create and maintain a technology accessibility program that ensures the continuing delivery of accessible technology solutions to Oklahoma's job seekers.

OKABT will assist OESC to assure accessibility of a new website through assessment, consultation, or other means, and to assure that accessibility is part of their technology procurement process by utilizing the Technology Accessibility Program Review. This review is performed to identify key technology tools and resources for job seekers and internal audiences using the Technology Accessibility Integration Plan which will identify and prioritize technology tools such as web applications, website, documents, and/or multimedia, identify owners and managers of identified tools, formulate basis for technology accessibility training and

technical assistance, identify relevant practitioners and leadership for focused training, assess tools for accessibility, and assist in technology barrier removal.

#### Business and Employer Outreach

Oklahoma's Workforce System recognizes opportunities to reach Oklahoma's businesses and employers with a powerful message of Access for All. Through relationships old and new, DSU and OKABT will lead the workforce partners in working to arrange and deliver training to businesses and employers that will reduce their hesitation to hire job seekers with disabilities and to identify ways to educate about the benefits of directly recruiting and hiring job seekers with disabilities. The creation of fact sheets and other concise deliverables will help businesses and employers to understand not only their obligations, but also the importance of hiring and promoting job seekers with disabilities.

DSU utilizes its ADA Coordinator as a resource to provide consultation, technical assistance, and site reviews to identify accessibility issues to all workforce system partners and other agencies, entities, and businesses and employers. The DSU ADA Coordinator provides training in various aspects of the Americans with Disability Act and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design to staff and supervisors of these entities as well. These services are available in order to advance the promotion of equal access for individuals with disabilities in programs, services, and buildings statewide.

The DSU delivers assistive technology for job seekers in their journey to employment. Assistive technology specialists complete a variety of different assistive technology assessments and evaluations for job seekers, business work sites, and system partners. The types of evaluations are home modifications, vehicle modifications, personal mobility needs, computer access, worksite modifications, activities of daily living, communication school accommodations, and accessibility reviews. Assistive technology specialists focus on the reported obstacle, rather than the disability diagnosis. A big part of an assistive technology evaluation is to identify what the real problem or obstacle is for the individual job seeker or business work site.

#### One-stop system certification policy standards for accessibility

Oklahoma's Workforce System commitment on enhanced accessibility will continue by 'Thinking Accessibility' while serving individuals with disabilities. The DSU's Initiative of "Accessibility = Access for All" within the Oklahoma Works workforce system, is a standard that has been set to springboard success for Oklahoma's business and employers and job seekers in reaching Oklahoma's Goal of Wealth Generation.

The one-stop system standards and certification criteria policy will be designed utilizing the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) for physical accessibility. The Oklahoma Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Law and Standards will be applied for accessibility of digital services. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Levels A and AA, will be utilized for websites, web applications, and digital documents certification criteria and standards.

Ensuring opportunities for all is critical to meet the goal in creating an environment where people with disabilities have the same opportunities to participate in the workforce as do people without disabilities. As businesses and employers find that the labor pool is tightening, following through on these criteria and standards will ensure businesses and employers have access to more qualified people to fill needed positions.

#### (a) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals. Describe:

Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

The DSU and the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council (ORC) quarterly and annually review and report on the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program.

- (1) An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:
  - (A) Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
  - (B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

#### Evaluation of the VR program goals

Strategies that contributed to the achievement of meeting goals and priorities include;

- Job Seekers successful closures increased
- Job Seekers wages increased upon employment
- DSU focuses monthly upon data and budgetary case management processes to assure priority group wait lists are limited or non-existent

Factors that impeded the achievement of meeting goals and priorities include;

- DSU business services model underdeveloped in focusing VR program goals and priorities
- DSU job placement specialists do not have defined, clear roles
- DSU job seekers employability and skill deficiencies

- (2)An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

- (A)Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- (B)Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

#### Evaluation of the Supported Employment Program goals

Strategies that contributed to the achievement of meeting goals and priorities include;

- Increased number of contracted CRPs with DSU to assist individuals with significant barriers to employment achieve a successful employment outcome
- DSU's partnership with DDS and State Employment Leadership Network (SELN)
- DSU's partnership with ODMHSAS, including the pilot employment services contract, to assist individuals with serious mental illness achieve a successful employment outcome

Factors that impeded the achievement of meeting goals and priorities include;

- Lack of DSU contracted CRPs in rural areas of the state
- Lack of options for DSU employment contracts to meet the needs of all individuals with significant barriers to employment (i.e. Customized Employment; Intensive SE Services)
- Lack of joint contracted DSU/DDS CRPs

- (3)The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

Evaluation of the VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA

For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015, the DSU did not meet Primary Indicator 1.2, under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The following information describes the case management reporting structure for FFY 14 and 15.

1.1 Successful closure must be equal or exceed previous year.

FFY 14	2200
FFY 15	2300

1.2 Successful closures versus unsuccessful closures, at least 55.8%.

FFY 15	49.53%
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1.3 Competitive employed individuals equal to at least minimum wage, at least 72.6%.

FFY 15	96.83%
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1.4 Competitively employed equal to at least the minimum wage, with significant disabilities, at least 62.4%.

FFY 15	91.29%
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1.5 Average hourly earnings equal to at least minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings, ratio is .52.

FFY 15	.55
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1.6 Competitively employed earning equal to at least minimum wage, reporting their income as largest single source at exit of program compared to percentage reporting their income as largest single source at application, level is difference of 53%.

FFY 15	81.94%
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2.1 The service rate for minority backgrounds compared to non-minority backgrounds, ratio of .80

FFY 15	.94
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The DSU failed Indicator 1.2, of the closed cases that received services, the percentage with an employment outcome. In addressing the failure of Indicator 1.2, the DSU will focus upon the case process upfront to work with job seekers and provide employment information during the planning process, before writing a plan for employment; engaging job seekers in their employment goals. The DSU will target success by focusing upon comprehensive assessments as the core part of the employment plan. The DSU is setting higher expectations through the work with Coaching for VR Quality Outcomes, utilizing more resources statewide, and connecting with more national initiatives and programs such as the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP). The DSU will also focus on the new statewide increase in the Basic Living Requirement, and intensive technical assistance through internships.

The DSU is committed to meeting the performance accountability measures and working with core program partners, as outlined under section 116 of WIOA.

(4)How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

Report on the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities for Fiscal Year 2014

The Innovations Unit was formed to expand focus and increase efficiency through a system wide approach. Statewide Innovations Trainings are scheduled in an effort to improve communication and encourage the development of Project Leaders with a focus of improving overall employment outcomes in communities across the state for individuals served by the DSU.

Activities undertaken for Innovation and Expansion during fiscal year 2014 totaled \$332,103. The DSU is vested in innovative and expansion activities by ensuring improved efficiency and service delivery through a system wide approach. Projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- Club Houses – Transitional Employment
- Educational Sponsorship
- Student Awards Banquet
- Conversational Spanish Classes
- Parent Advisory Board pilot
- Job Readiness Boot Camp
- Blood bank account for DRS
- Brainstorming for Success – A Transition Forum
- WINGS
- Walgreens Experiential Learning Project pilot
- Business Advisory Council
- Job Placement Expansion Tribal VR
- DRS Expo

(a) Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services. Include the following:

- (1) The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.
- (2) The timing of transition to extended services.

#### Quality, Scope and Extent of Supported Employment Services

DSU remains committed to the provision of quality services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. Quality of services is based on Supported Employment outcome based contracts.

#### Quality

Milestones are preauthorized and monitored by the counselor working with the individual. In order to be paid, the CRP must submit evidence that each outcome has been achieved. Some outcomes include individual and employer satisfaction surveys. The employee survey is designed to reflect satisfaction with the job and any concerns. The employer survey is designed to reflect evaluation of the individual's job performance, stability, and training needs.

There are contract performance measures defined in the contract. There is a "Minimum Contracts Standards" section which defines standards for average work hours and average wages at closure. This section also defines requirements for staff qualifications such as base salary paid and completion of required training.

DSU is committed to providing excellent training for CRPs to ensure quality services for individuals. DSU has contracted with the University of Oklahoma since 1987 to provide training for CRP staff. The Employment Consultant (EC) must complete the basic EC training within 6 months of hire. Each EC must also successfully

complete the following additional training courses within 12 months of hire: Social Security Work Incentives; Effective Training at Work; Job Development/Marketing; Job Club; On-line Introduction to Positive Behavior Supports in the Workplace (pre-requisite for positive behavior supports and instructional supports); Positive Behavior in the Workplace and Instructional supports. Following completion of the required training listed above, six hours of continuing education is required each year. The DSU staff also provides quarterly training and two additional advanced trainings annually to CRPs to keep them up-to-date on current best practices.

DSU monitors contract compliance, provides an outcomes based report on data drawn from the AWARE case management program. DSU reports to CRPs on minimum contract standards and whether those standards have been met or will require a plan for improvement. Every CRP has a TA who helps resolve service delivery problems and monitors for contract compliance on an annual basis.

### Scope

The DSU contract allows CRPs to serve individuals with the most significant disabilities without restriction on disability type. The majority of individuals served in Supported Employment are individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or serious mental illness. Individuals with other types of disabilities are being served as well. DSU continues to seek methods to increase participation of individuals with all types of disabilities in supported employment programs. ESS provides training on Supported Employment to DSU staff in an on-going effort to reach underserved and unserved populations.

The Supported Employment contract offers two levels of support; regular rate, and highly challenged rate for those with greater support needs. If the DSU counselor determines the individual will require additional support to be successful, milestones can be authorized at the highly challenged rate.

### Extent

The DSU issues annual Supported Employment contracts serving individuals with the most significant disabilities. The figures hinge on the support of the state to match federal dollars necessary to provide Supported Employment to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

### Timing

Extended services are a continuation of ongoing support services provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities in Supported Employment at completion of stabilization, during the “Successful Rehabilitation” Milestone and beyond the DSU case closures.

## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

### CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The (enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, <sup>10</sup> and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act <sup>11</sup> ;

<sup>10</sup> Public Law 113-128.

<sup>11</sup> Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

2.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (enter the name of designated State agency) <sup>12</sup> agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan <sup>13</sup> , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations <sup>14</sup> , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan <sup>15</sup> , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations <sup>16</sup> , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
4.	The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
8.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority to submit the VR services

<sup>12</sup> All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

<sup>13</sup> No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>14</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

<sup>15</sup> No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>16</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.



	portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

## ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

<b>The State Plan must provide assurances that:</b>	
1.	<b>Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:</b> The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2.	<b>Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:</b> The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3.	<b>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:</b> The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to: (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.. (b) the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected): (A) is an independent State commission. (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the

	<p>Rehabilitation Act. the non-Federal share, as described in 34 CFR 361.60.</p> <p>(d) the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (Yes/No)</p> <p>(e) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act . Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/No)</p> <p>(f) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.</p> <p>(g) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(h) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act .</p> <p>(i) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(j) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(k) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.</p> <p>(l) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
4.	<p><b>Administration of the Provision of VR Services:</b> The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <p>(a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act .</p> <p>(c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)</p> <p>(d) comply with all required available comparable services and benefits, determined</p>

	<p>to be available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act and.</p> <p>(e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act .</p> <p>(f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs</p>
5.	<p><b>Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:</b></p> <p>(a) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
6.	<p>(a) <b>Financial Administration:</b> The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan</p>

	for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.	<p>(a) <b>Provision of Supported Employment Services:</b> The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act</li> <li>ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1: Performance Goals for the Core Programs

*(\*Oklahoma is operating under previously agreed upon performance accountability measures. Updates to those measures will be made when new guidance is received. )*

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

	Projected Baseline	PY 2016 / FY 2017			PY 2017 / FY 2018		
		Proposed	Negotiated	Proposed Final Change in Performance	Proposed	Negotiated	Proposed Final Change in Performance
<b>Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>							
Adults	56	57					
Dislocated Workers	70	72					
Youth	62	63					
Wagner- Peyser / Labor Exchange	61%	1%					
Adult Education	*Note-1						
Rehabilitative Services	*Note-2						
<b>Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)</b>							
Adults	65	66					
Dislocated Workers	80	81					
Youth	70	71					
Wagner- Peyser / Labor Exchange	82%	1%					
Adult	*Note-1						

<b>Education</b>							
<b>Rehabilitative Services</b>	*Note-2						
<b>Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)</b>							
<b>Adults</b>	6420	6425					
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	7340	7345					
<b>Youth</b>	4000	4010					
<b>Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange</b>	\$13,000	\$100.00					
<b>Adult Education</b>	*Note-1						
<b>Rehabilitative Services</b>	*Note-2						
<b>Credential Attainment Rate</b>							
<b>Adults</b>	Undetermined*						
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	Undetermined*						
<b>Youth</b>	Undetermined*						
<b>Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange</b>	Undetermined*						
<b>Adult Education</b>	Undetermined*						
<b>Rehabilitative Services</b>	Undetermined**						
<b>Measureable Skill Gains</b>							
<b>Adults</b>	Undetermined*						
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	Undetermined*						
<b>Youth</b>	Undeter						

	mined*						
<b>Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>Adult Education</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>Rehabilitative Services</b>	*Note-2						
<b>Effectiveness in Serving Employers</b>							
<b>Adults</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>Youth</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>Adult Education</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>Rehabilitative Services</b>	Undeter mined**						
<b>Combined Federal Partner Measures</b>							
<b>1</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>2</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>3</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>etc.</b>	Undeter mined*						
<b>State / Governor Education and Workforce Measures</b>							

<b>1</b>	Undeter						
<b>2</b>	mined*						
<b>3</b>	Undeter						
<b>etc.</b>	mined*						

\*These measures will be addressed upon further guidance from our federal programs. Given the early submission timeline and the need for required approvals from the state board and public comment, data are not available at this time.

\*Note-1 Data sharing MOU is currently in process.

\*\*Note-2 OKDRS will provide the rehabilitative data upon completion of changes made to the vocational rehabilitation case management system and the development of statewide data sharing agreements.



## Appendix A

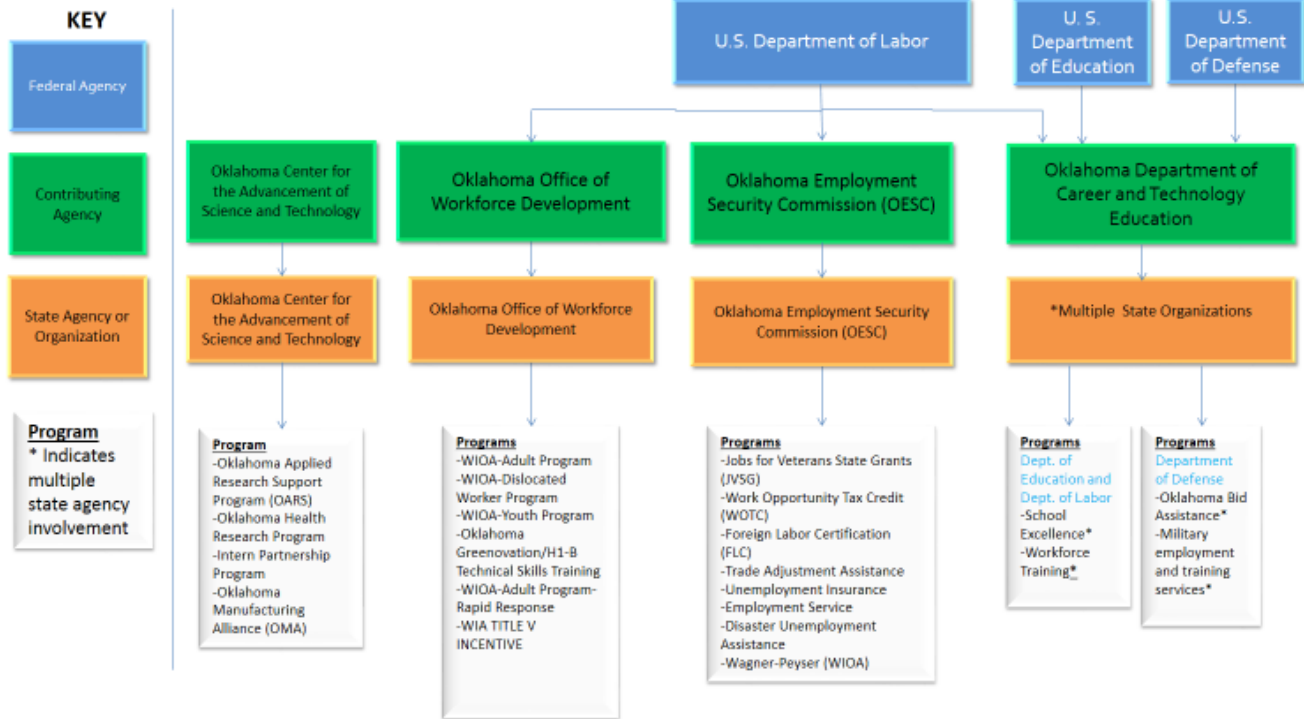


# ASSET MAPS

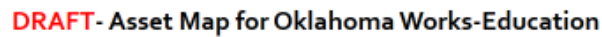
1. WORKFORCE: Career Tech, Workforce Development, Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC), Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST)
2. EDUCATION: Higher Ed, Career Tech, Oklahoma Board of Private Vocational Schools, Office of Educational Quality & Accountability and Corrections
3. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES: Health and Human Services (Rehab Services, DHS, HCA)

**DRAFT**

## DRAFT- Asset Map for Oklahoma Works-Workforce Development, OESC, Career Tech



\*State Agencies and Organization (Please see Asset Map in Excel for specific program details)- Career Tech, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Education, Department of Correction, Department of Commerce, Office of Juvenile Affairs, Regents, State Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Partnerships on Assessments, Office of Management and Enterprise Services, Oklahoma State University, Veteran Affairs, Oklahoma Employment and Security Commission,



\*State Agencies and Organization (Please see Asset Map in Excel for specific program details)- Career Tech, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Education, Department of Correction, Department of Commerce, Office of Juvenile Affairs, Regents, State Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Partnerships on Assessments, Office of Management and Enterprise Services, Oklahoma State University, Veteran Affairs, Oklahoma Employment and Security Commission, Career Tech

# Oklahoma State Department of Education- Program Descriptions

## Federal Agency: None

Contributing Agency: OSDE

State Agency: OSDE

### Competitive Grants (Academic Affairs & Planning Competitive Grants)

- AlphaPlus
- Catalyst Learning Competitive Grant
- Katherine B. Payne Education Center
- Kiss Institute Practical Robotics
- OETA
- Oklahoma A+ Schools
- Oklahoma Arts Institute
- Oklahoma Science and Engineering Fair
- Think Through Math
- United States Foundation for Inspirational and Recognition of Science and Technology (USFIRST)

### Curriculum & Instruction (Academic Affairs & Planning Curriculum & Instruction)

- Advanced Placement (AP)
- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
- English Language Learner Program
- Gifted and Talented
- Math Implementation Strategies
- National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI)
- OKMath/OKSci Leadership
- PD On Your Plan
- Personal Financial Literacy
- Reading Sufficiency Act
- Science Implementation Strategies
- Standards Development
- WebEx Connection
- World Languages

### Instructional Technology (Academic Affairs & Planning Instructional Technology)

- Instructional Technology

### Parent Engagement (Academic Affairs & Planning Parent Engagement)

- Character Education

### Educator Quality

- ACE Remediation
- Alternative Education
- Dropout Prevention
- Professional Development & Technical Assistance
- Staff Development for Schools
- Teacher Certification
- Teacher Leader Effectiveness (TLE)

### Special Education

- Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship (LNHS)

## Federal Agency: USDA

Contributing Agency: OSDE

State Agency: OSDE

### Child Nutrition Programs

- After School Snack Program (ASSP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
- Special Milk Program (SMP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSFP)

## Federal Agency: USDE

Contributing Agency: OSDE

State Agency: OSDE

### Curriculum & Instruction (Academic Affairs & Planning Curriculum & Instruction)

- Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

### Instructional Technology (Academic Affairs & Planning Instructional Technology)

- Connected
- Future Ready Schools

### Office of Assessment (Academic Affairs & Planning Office of Assessment)

- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), or The Nation's Report Card
- Oklahoma School Testing Program

### Parent Engagement (Academic Affairs & Planning Parent Engagement)

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Parent and Community Engagement

### Office of School Support (Academic Affairs & Planning Office of School Support)

- School Improvement Grant
- School Improvement/ School Support

### Data

- Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS)

### Educator Quality

- Bullying Prevention
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Suicide Prevention

### Federal Programs

- Title I Videoconference Network
- Title I, Part A
- Title I, Part C
- Title I, Part D
- Title II, Part A
- Title II, Part B
- Title III - (ELL) English Language Acquisition, Language acquisition, Language Enhancements and Academic Achievement Act.
- Title VI, Part B
- Title VII Indian Ed
- Title X, Part C

### Special Education

- Special Education Services, IDEA Part B
- Special Education Services, State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)

